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Shah to review Manipur situation as President's rule nears end

High-level meeting to assess law, order and path to restoring democratic governance

NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah will begin the New Year with a high-level review meeting today to assess the security and administrative situation in Manipur, where President's Rule is scheduled to end on February 13. The meeting assumes significance as the Centre weighs the possibility of facilitating a political process in the violence-hit state.

Sources said the review will be attended by Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla, state government advisor Kuldiep Singh, Chief Secretary PK Goel, Director General of Police Rajiv Singh and senior officials from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The Governor and key state officials have already arrived in the national capital for the deliberations.

With relative calm prevailing after prolonged ethnic violence between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities, the Centre is keen to assess whether conditions are conducive for a transition towards elected governance. According to officials, the agenda will focus on law and order, coordinated security deployment, intelligence assessment, and progress on development initiatives in violence-affected areas.

A senior official said the meeting would also review recent developments on the ground and the effectiveness of security arrangements put in place over the past months. "Ensuring a stable and secure environment will be critical if the Centre decides to facilitate a political process in the state," the source added.

Manipur was placed under President's Rule following the resignation of former Chief Minister N Biren Singh amid sustained ethnic unrest. Since then, the state has been administered by the Governor with support from central security forces. Parliament has approved multiple extensions of Central rule, the most recent in August 2025, extending it until mid-February 2026.

Sources indicated that the outcome of the January 2 meeting could set the tone for restoring democratic governance. Any decision on government formation, they said, would depend on sustained peace, improved security conditions and consensus among political stakeholders, aligning with the Centre's broader objective of long-term stability and development in Manipur.

DCM hails 2025 governance gains, promises Bengaluru mobility push in 2026

Deputy CM says state delivered on promises, infrastructure expansion key highlight.

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar on Thursday described 2025 as a "successful year" for Karnataka, marked by decisive governance, infrastructure development, and resolution of long-pending issues, particularly in Bengaluru.

Speaking to the media, Shivakumar highlighted that the government had delivered on key promises, focusing on irrigation, investments, and urban development. He said traffic bottlenecks in the capital, such as at Hebbal, were finally addressed through long-pending works. "We have undertaken a difficult, long-pending work. Now there will be no blockage, and with the Hebbal Flyover, the long-pending problem has been sorted out," he said.

Looking ahead, Shivakumar promised a major push for mobility in Bengaluru in 2026. "As far as mobility is concerned, various initiatives will be implemented next year," he noted, expressing optimism for smoother commutes and improved urban transport.

The Deputy CM also cited historic decisions in the Irrigation Department and the Cauvery water dispute, describing them as milestones for the state. He emphasized that Karnataka's governance achievements had earned national recognition, with even the Prime Minister reportedly praising the state's efforts.

Shivakumar lauded the Home Department and police for maintaining law and order during New Year celebrations, congratulating Home Minister G. Parameshwara for ensuring security despite alleged threats.

Recalling his 35-year political journey, Shivakumar claimed that the government's initiatives in 2025 reflected an unprecedented level of administrative focus and commitment, laying the foundation for further transformation across Karnataka in 2026.

QUICK READ

Indo-Bangla Border Recorded Highest Infiltration Attempts

NEW DELHI: India recorded its highest number of infiltration attempts along the Bangladesh border in 2025, official data revealed. The Ministry of Home Affairs reported 1,104 instances in the first 11 months of 2025, with 2,556 people arrested. Between January 2014 and November 2025, 8,632 infiltration attempts on the India-Bangladesh border led to 21,407 arrests, the highest among all borders. By comparison, the India-Pakistan border saw 32 incidents in 2025, while India-Myanmar had 95, and India's borders with Bhutan and Nepal recorded 54 cases.

Sin Goods: Cigarette, Beedi, Pan Masala to Be Costlier

NEW DELHI: From February 1, pan masala, cigarettes, tobacco, and related products will become costlier as the government implements higher levies, officials said. Pan masala and tobacco will attract a GST rate of 40%, while beedis will face 18% GST. In addition, a Health and National Security Cess will apply to pan masala, and additional excise duty will be levied on tobacco products. These new levies replace the existing compensation cess. The Finance Ministry has also notified rules for packing machines for chewing tobacco, jarda, scented tobacco, and gutkha, effective from February 1, 2026.

The remarks come amid an ongoing political debate within the Karnataka Congress

'Chief Ministership is for high command to decide'

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara on Thursday clarified that any decision on the state's Chief Ministership lies solely with the Congress high command. Speaking to the media, he dismissed speculation linking him to a potential leadership change.

"There is no 'my team'. Some friends or well-wishers may express their views on their own. Even when I visit districts, some people say such things. It is their interest, but ultimately, the high command will make a decision," Parameshwara said.

The remarks come amid an ongoing political debate within the Karnataka Congress as the government reaches its halfway mark. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, and Parameshwara himself are seen as central figures in the unfolding internal dynamics.

Earlier, the Home Minister extended New Year greetings to the people of Karnataka and praised the state police for ensuring peaceful celebrations. "I personally sat in the command centre, monitored the situation,

and issued instructions wherever large gatherings were reported. I am very happy that the celebrations were peaceful," he said.

Parameshwara also highlighted administrative progress in the police department, noting the completion of over 30 promotions, including officers moving from SP to DIG and DIG to IG ranks. He welcomed the Centre's allocation of Rs 352 crore for police modernisation, calling it a "significant development" after years of requests. Senior police officials met the Home Minister at his Bengaluru residence earlier in the day to review law and order and security preparedness, reflecting the administration's proactive approach to maintaining public safety.

NY celebrations were peaceful across K'taka: Home Minister

New Year celebrations across Karnataka, including Bengaluru, passed off peacefully with no major untoward incidents, Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Thursday, crediting effective policing and responsible public behaviour. Extending New Year greetings, Parameshwara said people celebrated the occasion "responsibly", which helped law enforcement agencies maintain order despite large crowds. He noted that while over 10 lakh people were expected to turn out in Bengaluru, police estimates put participation at around seven to eight lakh. "I personally monitored the situation from the command centre till 1.30 am," he said. The minister said the city witnessed unprecedented security arrangements, with 20,000 police personnel deployed across Bengaluru. "For the first time, such a large force was deputed, and there were no major incidents, traffic jams or serious accidents," he said.

Blast near Nalagarh police station rattles area, no casualties reported

NALAGARH

Panic briefly gripped Nalagarh town in Himachal Pradesh's Solan district on Thursday after a blast occurred in a lane near the Nalagarh police station, officials said. No casualties were reported in the incident, which took place around 9.40 am.

The impact of the explosion was strong enough to shatter windows of nearby buildings, with locals saying the loud sound was heard from a distance of 400 to 500 metres. Eyewitnesses reported that even 16 mm-thick glass panes

broke and buildings shook following the blast.

Police rushed to the spot and immediately cordoned off the area to prevent public movement. Baddi Superintendent of Police Vinod Dhiman said a forensic team has collected samples from different locations and the exact cause of the explosion will be known after laboratory analysis.

Dhiman said no threatening calls or emails were received, and preliminary findings suggest no mischief involving explosives. CCTV footage from the surrounding area is being scanned as part of the investigation.

The SP added that a large quantity of scrap material was stored in the vicinity, and an explosion caused by paint or other chemical substances could not be ruled out. Scrap dealers have been instructed to strictly follow safety norms.

Russia claims Ukrainian drone attack killed 24

KHERSON

Russia on Thursday accused Ukraine of killing at least 24 people, including a child, in a drone attack on a hotel and café during New Year celebrations in a Russian-controlled part of Ukraine's southern Kherson region. Vladimir Saldo, the Russian-installed governor of Kherson, said on Telegram that three Ukrainian drones struck a hotel and café in the coastal village of Khorly, where civilians had gathered to mark the New Year.

Majority citizens trust polls, EVMs: K'taka survey

BENGALURU

A recent Karnataka survey has found that most citizens believe elections in India are conducted freely and fairly, with trust in electronic voting machines (EVMs) on the rise. The Statewide survey, covering 5,100 respondents across 102 Assembly constituencies in Bengaluru, Belagavi, Kalaburagi, and Mysuru divisions, was commissioned by Chief Electoral Officer V Anbukumar.

The endline survey, conducted after the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, found that 84.55% of respondents agreed that elections are free and fair, with the highest trust in Kalaburagi (84.67% agree, 10.19% strongly agree). Belagavi followed with 69.62% agreement and 19.24% strong agreement.

Regarding EVMs, 83.61% of respondents considered them trustworthy. Trust was highest in Kalaburagi (83.24% agree, 11.24% strongly agree), followed by Mysuru (70.67% agree, 17.92% strongly agree). This marks an increase from 77.9% in 2023.

The survey also revealed that 16.3% of respondents faced inducements, mainly government scheme benefits (42.26%) and job promises (34.09%), with Kalaburagi and Bengaluru showing higher incidences. Women's voting autonomy showed mixed results: 34.57% agreed they needed to consult male family members before voting, while 51.64% disagreed. Of the respondents, 95.75% said they voted in the 2024 elections, and 95.44% confirmed their names were correctly listed on the voter rolls. The survey, conducted by Mysuru-based GRAAM (Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement), provides insight into citizens' confidence in Karnataka's electoral process.

India, Pakistan exchange lists of nuclear installations, prisoners

NEW DELHI

Continuing a longstanding practice, India and Pakistan on Thursday exchanged lists of nuclear installations and prisoners, the Ministry of External Affairs said.

Under the 1988 bilateral agreement prohibiting attacks on nuclear facilities, both countries are required to share details of atomic installations annually. Pakistan handed over a list of 257 Indian prisoners, including 199 fishermen and 58 civilians, to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. India similarly shared its list of Pakistani prisoners with officials in New Delhi.

Foreign Office spokesman Tahir Andrabi said the exchanges were consistent with treaty obligations, ensuring transparency despite strained bilateral ties following last May's four-day military hostilities. The prisoner lists are exchanged biannually, in January and July, through diplomatic channels.

The nuclear installations agreement, signed on December 31, 1988, and effective from January 27, 1991, requires both nations to inform each other of facilities covered under the pact at the start of each calendar year. The move reflects the continuation of dialogue on nuclear security and consular matters, even amid ongoing tensions.

SKI RESORT BAR BLAST

'Several dozen' killed, 100 injured in explosion at crowded bar

CRANS-MONTANA, SWITZERLAND

Several dozen people were killed and around 100 others injured after a powerful explosion and subsequent fire ripped through a crowded bar in the luxury Alpine ski resort of Crans-Montana early Thursday, Swiss police said. The blast occurred as revellers were celebrating the New Year, turning a festive night into one of Switzerland's deadliest tragedies in recent years.

Police in the canton of Valais confirmed that the explosion took place at around 1.30 am local time at a popular bar named Le Constellation. While authorities declined to provide a precise death toll, Italy's foreign ministry, citing information from Swiss police, said approximately 40 people were believed to have been killed.

"There has been an explosion of unknown origin. There are several injured, and several dead," police spokesperson Gaetan Lathion told, adding that more than 100 people were inside the building at the time. Cantonal president Mathias Reynard said what should have been a

moment of celebration "turned into a nightmare."

The injured were rushed to hospitals across the region, including facilities in Lausanne, Geneva and Zurich. Officials said several victims could be foreign nationals, as Crans-Montana is a major international tourist destination.

Authorities sealed off the area and imposed a temporary no-fly zone as rescue and forensic teams worked through the debris. Police commander Frédéric Gisler described the scale of loss as "devastating."

Officials said preliminary findings suggest the incident was accidental and not terror-related. While early reports mentioned an explosion, fire officials indicated the blast may have been caused by the blaze itself. Unconfirmed reports have suggested fireworks or pyrotechnics could be involved.

A reception centre and helpline have been set up for affected families as investigations continue into the exact cause of the disaster.

Honour killing: PUCL holds black robes protest in City

MYSURU

Condemning the honour killing in Dharwad, a silent black robes protest was be held on Thursday between 5 and 6.30 pm at Gandhi Square in Mysore city by a group of people's action groups and civil organizations such as PUCL, Karnataka Forum Against Atrocities on Women.

In a joint press release here on Thursday, Kamal Gopinath, President and V Purushottam, General Secretary, PUCL Mysore have strongly condemned the killing in the name of disgustingly shameful 'honour' based on medieval yet still hugely prevalent notions of caste superiority, actively fueled also by the Manu Smrithi advocates. What provoked the attack was the marriage of an "upper" caste woman to a "lower" caste man, thereby bringing "dishonour" to her family and clan. Manya (née Manya Patil) was a Lingayat, and her decision to marry a Madiga (Scheduled Caste) man had incurred the family's wrath, and the killing that followed.

They said curtains come down on the year 2025 for the women of Karnataka with one of the most inhuman crimes that shatters and questions the morals of humanity in the 21st century – the evil killing of, a pregnant 19-year-old Mandya Vivekananda Doddamani by her father and his supporters at Inam Veerapur village in Dharwad district in north Karnataka on December 21, 2025. The grievously injured woman, married a few months ago and pregnant, died in the hospital.

They said PUCL is clear that merely changes in the law cannot stem this social slur and calls for concerted action by all sections of society, especially the political class and self-proclaimed leaders of different faiths. Assertive action in this case alone will not stem this diabolical thinking and acts. It requires a deeper social action. PUCL, protests this killing, plus other cases of increasing atrocities against women, compounded by the judicial delay in disposal of cases and support being received by the perpetrators of such crimes from the powers that be. Members from Samatha Vedike, RLHP, Samatha Adhyayana Kendra, Odanadi Seva Trust, AIMSS and Dwanai Mahila Okkuta participated in the silent black robes protest.

SUBMITS MEMORANDUM

Meanwhile, members of Dalit Sangarsh Samithi met Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr P.Shivaraj and submitted a memorandum to him condemning the Dharwad honour killing incident and demanded a stern action against the guilty.

They said in the 21st century such incidents had been taking place which was an insult to the whole humanity.

At a time when everyone was striving to banish casteism, the incident of honour killing reflected the mentality of the people till date.

Vishnuvardhan was a champion of human values: Ex-MP Simha

MYSURU

The 16th death anniversary of Karnataka Ratna, Sahasa Simha Dr. Vishnuvardhan was observed at D Devaraja Urs Road in Mysuru by the Alliance Club of Mysuru Nalvadi.

On the occasion, former MP Prathap Simha, offered floral tributes to the portrait of Dr. Vishnuvardhan and said that Sahasa Simha, the pride of Kannadigas, Dr. Vishnuvardhan, remains vividly alive in the hearts of people as a champion of human values and through his excellent acting.

He described Vishnuvardhan as a legend of the Kannada film industry, the Bhargava of acting. On his death anniversary of Sahasa Simha Dr. Vishnuvardhan, they offer their hundred-crore salutations. K. B. Lingaraju, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Bettegowda, of the Alliance Club of Mysuru Nalvadi; Dinesh Gowda, BJP President of Chamaraja Constituency; Manju, BJP President of Narasimharaja Constituency; Vikram Iyengar, President of KMPK Trust; anchor Ajay Shastri; Sandesh Pawar, Vasantha Manish, Mohith Gowda, Umesh, Yashwanth, Vinod Aras, Prakash Rx, Srinivas, Gopal, and others were present.

TAKE NECESSARY ACTION REGARDING FALSE CERTIFICATES

HUNSUR

Although earlier SC/ST committee members had asserted that 13 families residing on Bachalli Road on the outskirts of the city belonged to the Soliga community, there is no documentary evidence to prove that these families belong either to the Soliga or Jenu Kuruba communities, informed Gangadhar, Taluk Welfare Officer of the Scheduled Tribes, at the meeting.

Providing information at the divisional-level SC/ST meeting held at the Sub-Divisional Officer's office, he stated that after visiting and inspecting the site several times, it was found that only nine families are currently residing there, and none of them possess any documents establishing their belonging to the Jenu Kuruba or Soliga communities. The department has also received complaints alleging that certain organisations are forcibly attempting to include these families under the Jenu Kuruba community.

Responding to the information, Sub-Divisional Officer R. Manjunath instructed the officials to closely examine whether false caste certificates have been issued or obtained and to submit a detailed report after thorough scrutiny.

When a committee member alleged that officials had failed to extend housing schemes to Scheduled Caste families in Biligere village, Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer Hongayya replied that out of 65 Scheduled Caste families in the village, 56 families have already been issued housing title deeds. Of the remaining nine beneficiaries, four have availed benefits under other schemes, and proposals have been submitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Corporation for the remaining five beneficiaries, he informed.

Regarding the installation of a Dr. B.R. Ambedkar statue, members stated that clear information about the location is yet to be received and sought answers from the officials. Responding to this, Tahsildar Manjunath said that the file related to identifying land for installing the Ambedkar statue in the city is currently with the Public Works Department Secretary's office, and the matter has been brought to the attention of the MLA for further action.

Speaking on the issue of providing sites to 30 nomadic families along the banks of the Lakshmanatirtha River in Kattemalavadi village, committee member Ashok said that houses have already been constructed and provided to seven nomadic families residing in the village. He clarified that 30 families are not residing there, and alleged that due to the collusion of previous committee members, huts had mushroomed along the riverbank, with unknown persons residing in them. He stated that theft incidents have increased in the village and surrounding areas due to these occupants, and villagers have submitted a memorandum requesting the taluk administration to take immediate action.

Ashok further informed the meeting that illegal Kerala lottery sales are rampant in H.D. Kote, Periyapatna, and Hunsur, and that tobacco auction sales are allegedly taking place in Kattemalavadi village. He said that around the auction market, Kerala lottery and ganja (marijuana) sales networks have increased, trapping farmers in these illegal activities.

"Speak in Kannada while you are in Karnataka"

MYSURU

Noted theatre activist and actor Mandya Ramesh said people must talk in Kannada while living in Karnataka.

Speaking as the chief guest at the 69th Kannada Rajyotsava celebration and award ceremony organized by the Dr. Gangubai Hangal Music and Performing Arts University of Karnataka, he said in recent times, it has become a kind of passion for people living in slums to have invitation cards printed in English. Also, the names of movies are in English. This trend is worrying. There are wonderful names in Kannada itself, why leave them in English? He questioned.

> **The University of Music is inviting and honoring deserving individuals. It is commendable that the honors are being given here without inviting any applications, without seeking recommendations, and without considering caste.**
>
> —Mandya Ramesh, Actor

Ramesh said love for Kannada should come from the mind. The roots of mother love and mother tongue should remain in our children, so that they can live in Kannada.

Among the hundreds of engineers who built the Burj Khalifa, two were from Mandya. One of them was from Dubai. When they found out that he had gone to Dubai, they invited me to their house for dinner and their language skills were amazing. " I was amazed to see the love and affection for our food and culture". Speaking after accepting the award, film director B. Suresh said that no other state celebrates the state formation day. It is only in Karnataka.

At the same time, the Kalavahini episode was released. Famous Bharatanatyam `Kalavidhi Dr. Vasundhara Dore Swamy, singer Dr. Sukanya Prabhakar, film director B. Suresh, and stage artist Rajappa Kiragasur were felicitated.

New year welcomed with distribution of school uniforms

MYSURU

New Year celebrations were held today at the Bala Bodidni Government School in Chamundipuram, Mysore in Mysuru on Thursday.

Uniforms were distributed to 23 students studying in the government school and sweets were distributed to all of them. New Year greetings were wished to all the children. This program was organized with the BJP President of Chamaraja constituency, Gopal Raja Urs, and Mysore Municipal Council former Member, M V Ramaprasad, and friends.

RC PATIL URGES PEOPLE TO SHINE IN ALL FIELDS

MYSURU

Regional Commissioner Nitesh Patil hoped that people of Mysuru and the state should achieve even greater success in all fields.

Speaking at the felicitation ceremony organised on Monday at the EMRC auditorium, Manasa Gangotri, by the Vishwamanava Mysuru University Employees' Forum and the Nava Vishwamanava Trust, honouring Prof. Anita Vimal Braggs, Principal of the College of Fine Arts, and other achievers, he said Mysuru has adequate facilities to excel in every field and these must be utilised effectively. Recognising and honouring achievers is a good practice as it encourages them to attain even greater accomplishments.

Patil said it was heartening to know that Prof. Anita Vimal Braggs, who is retiring, has rendered outstanding service as Principal of Maharaja's and the College of Fine Arts. In particular, she served for 38 years as an English professor and shaped thousands of students. He wished her a healthy and fulfilling post-retirement life and expressed hope that she would continue to serve society.

Prof. Anita Vimal Braggs said she had served as Principal of Maharaja's College, the University Evening College, and the College of Fine Arts. In addition to being an English professor in these institutions, she had also served at Yuvaraja's College. She said this was a kind of blessing for a language teacher.

She said she had worked quietly throughout her service, but humbly added that she had learned more from her students than she had taught them.

She expressed her appreciation that although women do not receive much encouragement in the university system, her students—now professors themselves—Dr. M.S. Sapna and Dr. H.P. Jyoti have moved forward and achieved what they aspired to.

She said that despite her reluctance, Vasudeva and the office-bearers of the Vishwamanava Forum organised this farewell programme. Following the example of former Maharaja's College Principal Prof. C.P. Suneetha, she announced on the spot that she would support the Trust by providing scholarships and handed over a cheque.

University Finance Officer K.S. Rekha, retired Director of Gandhi Bhavan and the Oriental Research Institute Prof. S. Shivrajappa, Syndicate member Mahadeshu, and professors Dr. M.S. Sapna and Dr. H.P. Jyoti also spoke.

Syndicate member Kyathanahalli Nagaraju, Forum President R. Vasudeva, Secretary Vinod, and other office-bearers were present.

FELICITATED

Senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar, scientist Dr. S. Srikantaswamy, NSS Programme Coordinator Dr. M.B. Suresh, District Rajyotsava Award recipients Dr. Vijayalakshmi Manapur and Dr. B.K. Gnanaprakash, Education Board member Suresh Palya, Thimmaiah, and Mysuru University Sports Department Officer B.S. Ravi were felicitated.

Winners of various sports competitions—P. Shashidhar, N. Prajwal, H.N. Charan, Darshan S. Belakeri, S.K. Chaluvaraju, R. Mahesh, S.C. Sathvik, Prateek S. Patil, T.S. Pavan, C. Aditya, Y. Prithviraj, K.R. Subhash, K.S. Rakshitha, M. Amulya, S. Nagashree, M. Hamsa, Chandana Gaddi, S.M. Nandini, A. Prithiv, N.C. Keerthana, Aishwarya, and B.C. Nayanaa—were also honoured. In addition, NSS and NCC cadets of Yuvaraja's College were felicitated.

Free eye check-up camp, legal assistance program mark 9th anniversary

MYSURU

The 9th anniversary of the Human Rights Service Committee was celebrated meaningfully through an eye check-up camp, legal awareness-assistance program, and an award ceremony. In a program organized at the Rotary Hall on JLB Road as part of Human Rights Day.

Achievers from various fields, including Human Rights Service Committee State President Dr. Seetharamegowda, Karnataka Sugama Sangeetha Parishad Mysore Unit President Dr. Nagaraj A. Byri, senior journalist Amshi Prasannakumar, Mysore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President K.B. Lingaraju, and Kodagu District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Chairperson C. Renukamba, were felicitated with the Manavaratna State Award.

Doctors at the Aenoja Eye Hospital conducted eye examinations on hundreds of people.

At the same time, ex-servicemen and farmers were felicitated. A cultural program performed by the students entertained everyone.

Arjun, an advocate said for online frauds, legal aid should be provided to the educated people who are facing difficulties. They are hesitant to go to lawyers for advice but they can get free legal aid from legal services.

Kodagu District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission Chairperson Renukamba said that they should protect our rights and respect the rights of others and then there will be no conflicts in the society.

Karnataka State Sahitya Parishad Chairperson M.C. Chondamma Ponnappa said that children should be made aware of the law. She suggested that the use of mobile phones, which is harmful to the mental and physical health of children, should be reduced.

Human Rights Service Committee Founder President Sturi Chandru, State General Secretary Shivaraj, Vice President Nataraj, Mysore Ahila Nagar President Amina Begum, Principal Secretary L. Rupa, District President Mula Yakumar, Working President Tejas Prithviraj, Suru District President Karate Kiran, Mysore President Santosh Antony were present.

Injustice to construction labourers decried

MYSURU

The Karnataka State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board is extorting money from construction workers. Under the name Ambedkar Seva Kendra, a newly created website (app) claims to provide free online registration for genuine construction workers. However, through this new website, ₹100 is being collected from workers for new registration and ₹50 for renewal, alleged G.Siddaraju, state president of the Karnataka State Bharata Mata Building Workers Union

In a press release here, he said even after months, genuine workers are not receiving their renewal cards. Similarly, new registration cards are not getting approval at all. When workers approach the office to inquire, officials say that a site inspection of the workplace is required, but without conducting any inspection, the cards are being rejected. In addition to this, benefits that should rightfully reach workers on time—such as maternity assistance, accident compensation, children's scholarships, and pension amounts—are not being disbursed even after a year. Despite all this, the Labour Welfare Board and the Labour Department are behaving like the proverb "the cat eats the butter and smears it on the dog's mouth," by facilitating money-making for agents in the name of tenders.

Siddaraju said Labour Minister Santosh Lad, at his own discretion, is introducing several useless schemes such as substandard kits, training camps, health camps, and mobile hospitals, which are of no real benefit, thereby doing injustice to workers. Furthermore, workers who have migrated from other states such as Odisha, Bihar, and Rajasthan are being issued labour cards in our state, and the benefits meant for Karnataka's construction workers are being provided to workers from other states. The Labour Department and the Labour Welfare Board immediately must stop all these practices. Failing this, all building and other construction workers' organisations across Karnataka will come together and launch an intense agitation, he warned.

Colours Crown the Night as Mysore Palace Welcomes 2026 in Regal Style

SHYAM SUNDARVATTAM
MYSURU

The majestic Mysore Palace transformed into a dazzling spectacle on Wednesday night as thousands of people gathered to usher in the New Year 2026 amid colour, cheer and royal grandeur.

Braving the biting cold, families, tourists and youngsters thronged the palace premises, eagerly awaiting the magical moment when the clock would strike midnight.

As the final seconds of 2025 ticked away, excitement rippled through the crowd. The countdown echoed across the illuminated palace grounds—9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1—and the very instant the clock touched 12 am, the night sky burst into life. Authorities of the Mysore Palace Board set off vibrant green crackers, triggering a spectacular firework display that marked the arrival of the New Year in royal style.

For a continuous 15 minutes, without a single pause, a mesmerising cascade of crackers lit up the skies above the palace. A melange of colours rent the darkness—greens, reds, golds and silvers dancing against the backdrop of the brilliantly illuminated palace. The audience watched with bated breath, their eyes fixed upward as thunderous claps from the crowd blended seamlessly with the booming fireworks. Mobile phones were raised high as people hurried to capture the unforgettable moments. Shouts of "Happy New Year" filled the air, with strangers exchanging smiles, greetings and handshakes, momentarily forgetting all barriers of familiarity. The festive spirit united everyone present, turning the palace precincts into a sea of joy and celebration.

Adding to the vibrancy of the occasion was the culmination of the ten-day Flower Show organised by the Palace Board. Thousands of visitors had flocked to the palace over the past days to witness the colourful floral arrangements, and Wednesday marked the grand finale of the exhibition, further enhancing the festive mood.

The Palace Board has been celebrating New Year festivities for the past few years, much to the delight of tourists who throng Mysuru during the year-end holiday season. This initiative has steadily grown into a major attraction, blending heritage with contemporary celebration.

In the wake of last week's tragic helium gas cylinder blast that claimed three lives, the police had made elaborate security arrangements in and around the palace. As a precautionary measure, every visitor was thoroughly frisked before being allowed entry into the palace premises. The police also imposed a complete ban on helium gas balloons across the city to prevent any untoward incidents.

With tight security, disciplined crowds and a breathtaking display of colours, the New Year celebration at Mysore Palace stood as a perfect blend of safety, splendour and shared happiness—an unforgettable royal welcome to 2026.

New Year Dawn Sees Sea of Devotees on Chamundi Hill

MYSURU

Thousands of devotees thronged Chamundi Hill on Thursday to usher in the New Year with divine blessings, continuing a long-standing tradition of beginning the year with a temple visit.

As per belief, visiting a temple on the first day of the New Year is considered auspicious, ensuring prosperity and protection throughout the year. Since Goddess Chamundeshwari is the presiding deity of Mysuru, devotees from across the city and neighbouring districts made a beeline to the hilltop shrine to seek her blessings.

Braving the early morning chill, devotees began arriving at the hill as early as 4 a.m. While many climbed the sacred 1,001 steps from the foothills, others reached the temple using public transport. Hundreds of regular worshippers parked their vehicles at the foothills and undertook the spiritual climb, while tourists joined the Mysureans in large numbers.

To prevent traffic congestion and chaos, the district administration imposed a ban on private vehicles at the hilltop. The KSRTC Mysuru Division rose to the occasion by operating special bus services from early morning, enabling smooth transportation of devotees to the shrine.

"I climb the 1,001 steps every New Year without fail. Starting the year with Goddess Chamundeshwari's blessings gives me immense peace," said Ramesh, a devotee from Nazarbad.

The Chamundi Hill Development Authority arranged separate queues to ensure hassle-free darshan, while the police installed metal barricades and strictly enforced the queue system. An adequate number of police personnel were deployed to manage the swelling crowds and maintain order.

"Despite the heavy rush, everything was well organised. The police and volunteers guided us patiently," said Lakshmi, a devotee who came with her family from Bengaluru.

In anticipation of the large turnout, Deputy Commissioner G. Lakshmikanth Reddy had convened a high-level meeting two days earlier to review preparations and issue necessary directions to officials to ensure that no untoward incidents occurred during the celebrations.

Hundreds of tourists visiting Mysuru for the New Year celebrations also joined the devotees, adding to the festive fervour on the hill.

"The atmosphere here is divine. Climbing the hill in the cold morning and seeing the goddess is an unforgettable experience," said Anita, a tourist from Chennai.

The event passed off peacefully without any incidents. However, police bandobast will continue for the next two to three days in view of ongoing religious programmes on Chamundi Hill.

The Art and Sculpture of Immortal Sculptor Jakanachari Are Eternal: MLC Dr Thimmaiah

MYSURU

The art and sculpture of Vishwakarma, the immortal sculptor Jakanachari, are eternal and everlasting. His artistic creations possess the power to shine brighter with the passage of time. Even after lakhs of years, his art and sculpture will remain immortal and continue to illuminate future generations, said Member of the Legislative Council Dr. D. Thimmaiah. He was speaking after inaugurating the Vishwakarma Immortal Sculptor Jakanachari Memorial Day–2026 by lighting the lamp and offering floral tributes to the portrait of Jakanachari. The programme was organised today by the district administration, the Department of Kannada and Culture, and the Mysuru City Corporation at the Kiruranga Theatre located in the Karnataka Kalamandira in Mysuru on Thursday.

He said carving images on stone is an extremely difficult task. However, one can see how beautifully immortal sculptor Jakanachari carved temples. It is impossible to place a value on his hard work and dedication. No matter which country they visit, the kind of temple sculptures and idol carvings found in India are not seen anywhere else. This is because of the sculptors. The Vishwakarma community has imbibed the ideals and hard work of immortal sculptor Jakanachari and continues to preserve his legac.

Another MLC C. N. Manjegowda said that immortal sculptor Jakanachari was one of Karnataka's greatest sculptors, who gained immense popularity through his extraordinary carvings. By observing memorial days of such great personalities, they are remembered, and the art and sculpture of immortal sculptor Jakanachari serve as an inspiration to all of them. No matter how many generations pass, the name of immortal sculptor Jakanachari will remain eternal. Everyone should learn about Jakanachari.

Presiding over the programme, Chamaraja Assembly Constituency MLA K. Harish Gowda said that no sculptor in India can erase the name of Jakanachari. That is why he is called Amara Shilpi Jakanachari (Immortal Sculptor Jakanachari). The Vishwakarma community today has a large population. Without this community, there would be no India, because for a marriage to take place, the mangalsutra has to be made; to build a house, carpentry work is needed—both require the Vishwakarma community. No auspicious ceremony can be conducted without their work.

Two Lakh Laddus Sweeten New Year at Yogalakshminarasimha Swamy Temple

MYSURU

The Sri Yogalakshminarasimha Swamy Temple at Vijayanagar witnessed an overwhelming turnout of devotees on Thursday as two lakh laddus were distributed to mark the New Year celebrations, transforming the temple premises into a hub of devotion, discipline and festivity.

As part of the age-old tradition of beginning the New Year by seeking divine blessings, devotees from various parts of Mysuru city and neighbouring areas gathered in large numbers at the temple from the early hours of the morning. The laddu distribution was organised as a prasada seva, symbolising prosperity, harmony and divine grace for the year ahead.

Devotees queued up patiently, chanting the name of Lord Yogalakshminarasimha, as volunteers and temple staff ensured the smooth distribution of laddus. Special arrangements were made to manage the heavy crowd, with clearly marked queues, drinking water facilities and the presence of volunteers to guide the devotees.

"The laddu prasada on New Year's Day has a special significance. It brings positivity and strength to our family," said Srinivas, a regular devotee from Vijayanagar.

The temple administration had begun preparations several days in advance, ensuring that the laddus were prepared hygienically using quality ingredients. Devotees appreciated the systematic arrangements, which helped avoid overcrowding and ensured that everyone received prasada without any inconvenience.

"This is our way of thanking the Lord for His blessings and seeking guidance for the coming year. The arrangements are excellent," said Lakshmi Narayan, a devotee who visited the temple with his family.

The festive atmosphere was enhanced by the devotional ambience, with bhajans and chants echoing throughout the temple complex. Elders, children and women were seen participating with equal enthusiasm, reflecting the deep-rooted spiritual culture of the city.

Temple authorities said that such large-scale prasada distribution fosters a sense of unity and devotion among the public. "The objective is to spread joy and devotion while ensuring discipline and safety," a temple official said.

Despite the massive turnout, the event passed off peacefully, thanks to the cooperation of devotees and the dedicated efforts of volunteers. Adequate police presence ensured smooth crowd management throughout the day.

The distribution of two lakh laddus not only added sweetness to the New Year celebrations but also reinforced the spiritual bond between the devotees and Sri Yogalakshminarasimha Swamy, making it a memorable and auspicious beginning to the year.

Power Interruption in Mysuru tomorrow

MYSURU

Due to underground cable installation works being carried out by the Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited (CESC), there will be an interruption in power supply on January 03 from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. in areas falling under the V.V. Mohalla Sub-Division.

Under the MUDA Ground 11 kV feeder, the affected areas include Vijayanagar 2nd Stage, the areas behind Vidyavardhaka College, Saptapadi Choultry, Oyster Bay, and surrounding localities.

Under the Gokulam 11 kV feeder, the power disruption will affect Gokulam 3rd Stage, Doctors' Corner, Mysore One Ground, ESI Quarters, and surrounding areas.

Under the Brindavan 11 kV feeder, power supply will be interrupted in Jayadevanagar, Lokanayakanagar, Mathuranagar, areas surrounding Lingayyana Kere, areas around the Post Office, Hebbal Main Road, and nearby localities.

Mysuru Youth celebrated New Year in novel way

MYSURU

By distributing blankets, the youth conveyed a meaningful message to society by celebrating the New Year in a purposeful manner.

Instead of indulging in fun and revelry during the New Year, a group of youths from the KMPK Charitable Trust welcomed the New Year in a special way by distributing blankets to homeless people living on the streets.

For the past 30 consecutive days, the Trust has been continuously distributing blankets to homeless and helpless people sleeping on roadsides.

On the last day of the year, without engaging in celebrations or entertainment, the youths visited the areas around Bandipalya Vegetable Market and personally enquired about the homeless people sleeping there before distributing blankets. On this special final day of the year, several youths joined hands with the KMPK Trust to extend their support.

The youth community displayed humanity by going to the locations where homeless people were living under trucks and distributing blankets to them. At a time when many youths, influenced by Western culture, choose to celebrate the New Year by travelling with friends to tourist spots, bursting crackers, cutting cakes, indulging in alcohol, and dancing in celebration, these youths set an example by distributing blankets to more than 50 homeless people, thereby celebrating the New Year in a meaningful way and delivering a strong message to society. On this occasion, KMPK Trust President Vikram Iyengar, BJP leader Jogi Manju, Congress leader G. Raghavendra, theatre artist Amit, anchor Ajay Shastri, S. N. Rajesh, Rakesh, Manjunath, Harish Naidu Duh and several others were present.

QUICK READ

Strike Ban Shock for Transport Workers

Bengaluru

Transport employees in Karnataka received a jolt ahead of the New Year after the state government issued a notification banning strikes for the next six months, effective January 1, 2026. The order directs transport workers not to resort to strikes under any circumstances during this period. The earlier notification restricting strikes expired on December 31, 2025, following which the government issued a fresh order extending the ban. Authorities warned that strict action would be taken if the directive is violated, including the possible invocation of the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA).

Teenage Girl Dies by Suicide Following Parents' Separation

Bengaluru

A 17-year-old girl allegedly died by suicide in Bengaluru, reportedly distressed by her parents' separation, police said on Thursday. The deceased, identified as Lekhna, had recently failed her Class 10 examinations and was staying at home with her mother after her parents separated due to a family dispute. Her father was living separately. Police said Lekhna left a note stating that she felt lonely and deprived of parental love, and held herself responsible for her death. She was found hanging at her residence on Wednesday night. The body has been sent to the KIMS Hospital mortuary for post-mortem examination.

Metro Boom on NY Eve: 8.93 Lakh Passengers, ₹3.08 Cr Revenue

Bengaluru

Namma Metro recorded a massive surge in ridership on New Year's Eve, with 8.93 lakh passengers travelling in a single day and generating ₹3.08 crore in revenue. In view of the New Year celebrations, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) extended service hours on the Purple, Green and Yellow lines. On December 31, 2025, metro services operated from 5 am till 3:10 am the next day to accommodate late-night commuters. During the extended operations, a total of 8,93,903 passengers used the metro network. The three corridors together earned ₹3.08 crore in fare revenue in a single day, reflecting the growing dependence on metro services for safe and efficient travel during major city events.

28 IPS Officers Promoted, 20 SPs Transferred in Reshuffle

Karnataka state government announces promotions and transfers of 48 IPS officers for New Year

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government carried out a major administrative reshuffle in the police department, ordering the promotion of 28 Indian Police Service (IPS) officers and the transfer of 20 others across the state. The changes, announced are aimed at strengthening policing, administration and leadership across key departments.

Among the senior officers promoted to the rank of Inspector General of Police (IGP) are Dr M B Boralingaiah (Southern Zone), Ramnivas Sepat (National Police Training School, Hyderabad), Anupama Agarwal (CRPF), Ajay Hilori (Additional Commissioner of Police, CCB, Bengaluru), and Dr Rohini Katoch Sepat (National Police Training School, Hyderabad).

A large group of officers has been elevated to the rank of Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG). Those promoted include Dr Bhimashankar S Guled (CID, Economic Offences Wing), Nikam Prakash Amrit (Central Service), G Rabad (National Police Training School), Rahul Kumar Shahpurvad (NIA, Delhi), Dharmendra Kumar Meena (Central Service), Ilakiya Karunakaran (Nisthuntu Wing), Dr C B Vedamurthy (Intelligence Wing), K M Shantaraju (ISD, Bengaluru),

Hanumantharaya (Human Rights Commission), D Devaraj (Police Training), Dr D R Sirigouri (Karnataka Lokayukta), Dr K Dharanidevi (Intelligence Wing), S Savita (Home Guards), C K Baba (KSRP), Abdul Ahad (BMTC Vigilance), S Girish (Anti-Narcotics Force), M Puttamadaiah (Principal, Police Training School, Kalaburagi), T Sreedhar (Police Headquarters), M Ashwini (UNMISS), A N Prakash Gowda (Special Task Force), Jinendra Khanagavi (Prisons), G K Rashmi (Railway Police), T P Shivakumar (SCRB), N Vishnuvardhan (Police Academy, Mysuru), Dr Sajeev M Patil (Chief of Police), Kamchari (Prison Security), H D Anand Kumar (Cyber Command), and Kala Krishnamurthy (Crime Division, Police Headquarters).

In addition, officers including Dr Anoop Shetty, Harish Pandey, Sumana D Pannekar, Divya Sara Thomas, Dika Kishore Babu, C B Rishyant, Nisha James, Madhura Veena and M V Chandrakanth (SP, Bengaluru Rural) have also been promoted.

The government has also ordered the transfer of 20 IPS officers, including Mohammed Sujitha (Southeastern Division, Bengaluru), M Muthuraj (Chamarajanagar), Sara Fatima (Railways), Arunangashu Giri (Raichur), Mithun Kumar (Northeastern Division), N Yatish (Western Division), Saidullah Adawat (Whitefield Division), Mallikarjun Baladandi (Mysuru), Pawan Nijjur (Ballari), Dr V J Shobharani (Mandya), Dr B T Kavita (CID), Nikhil (Shivamogga), Hariram Shankar (Udupi), A Srinivasulu (Kalaburagi), Ranjith Kumar Bandru (Chitradurga), K Ramarajan (Belagavi), K V Ashok (Tumakuru), Kannika Shikarival (Kolar), Shubanvita (Hassan) and Vikram Amte (Eastern Division, Bengaluru).

The reshuffle is expected to take effect immediately and play a key role in policing and governance in 2026.

OC Rule Relaxed for 30x40 Plots in Rural Karnataka

BENGALURU

In a major relief to farmhouse owners and newly built property owners in rural Karnataka, the state government has relaxed the mandatory Occupancy Certificate (OC) requirement for certain categories of houses constructed under gram panchayat (GP) limits.

According to officials from the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) department, the exemption applies to newly constructed residential buildings built on 30x40 sq ft plots in rural areas falling within gram panchayat jurisdiction. The relaxation has come into effect immediately.

As per the RDPR notification, any residential building comprising ground floor plus two floors (G+2) or stilt plus three floors (Stilt+3), constructed on a 30x40 sq ft plot in rural areas, will be exempted from obtaining a mandatory OC. Significantly, the exemption applies even if the construction was carried out without prior approval or plan sanction from the concerned authorities.

Until now, owners of newly built houses in rural areas were required to undergo a detailed inspection process before an OC was issued. This involved site visits by gram panchayat officials along with jurisdictional town planning authorities, verification of certificates issued by recognised engineers and architects, and scrutiny of building plan approvals.

A few weeks ago, the government had issued a similar exemption for newly built properties within the jurisdiction of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and other local bodies, waiving the mandatory OC requirement.

The government noted that these procedures were adding to the workload of staff at local bodies, many of which are already understaffed and overburdened. The existing process often resulted in delays in the disposal of files and slowed the delivery of various government services.

To ease administrative pressure and ensure faster service delivery, the government decided to relax the rules and exempt residential buildings constructed on 30x40 sq ft plots from the OC requirement, the order said.

Illegal Immigrants Will Be Deported: G Parameshwara

BENGALURU

Karnataka Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara asserted that the state government will not provide alternative housing or any other facilities to illegal Bangladeshi immigrants if they are identified during police verification and that such individuals will be deported in accordance with the law.

Responding to allegations by the BJP that people displaced during the Kogilu Layout demolition drive were illegal Bangladeshi immigrants, Parameshwara said the opposition should refrain from making "passing comments" without evidence. He added that the BJP was free to protest if it had objections but should avoid politicising sensitive administrative matters.

The Home Minister said the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) would prepare a detailed list of people who lost shelters during the demolition drive at Kogilu Layout. This list would then be handed over to the police for verification. "The police will examine the background of each individual, including their origin, how long they have been in Bengaluru and the duration of their stay at the site," he said.

"If any illegal Bangladeshi immigrants are found, the police will secure them and deport them to their country. Those involved in criminal activities will be arrested," Parameshwara said, making it clear that the government would not extend any benefits, including alternative housing, to foreign nationals staying illegally in the state.

Parameshwara criticised Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka for making what he termed politically motivated statements, pointing out that Ashoka himself had served as Home Minister and was well aware of the legal procedures involved in such cases. "Despite this, he is making such comments purely for political reasons," he said.

The Home Minister said identifying illegal Bangladeshi immigrants was an ongoing process across Karnataka. He noted that police have already directed coffee estate owners to verify the credentials of their labourers and submit details to jurisdictional police stations. Police teams are also conducting periodic visits to coffee estates to check for illegal immigrants, he added. On Wednesday, Ashoka had accused the Congress government of creating a "mini Bangladesh" in Karnataka through appeasement politics.

Govt Tells Colleges to Use Kannada for NAAC Communications

BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has directed all government and aided first-grade colleges and BEd institutions to use Kannada in their communications with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). The instruction was issued by the Department of Collegiate Education following a letter from the Kannada Development Authority (KDA).

A circular released by N Manjushree, Commissioner of Collegiate and Technical Education, stated that most correspondence between colleges and NAAC on accreditation-related matters has so far been in English. In view of the KDA's directive, principals of all government and aided degree colleges and BEd colleges have

now been instructed to communicate with NAAC primarily in Kannada. However, the circular clarified that institutions may translate documents into English if NAAC specifically seeks information-vw in that language.

KDA Chairman Purushotham Bilimale, in a letter to the department dated December 17, stressed that Kannada, as the sovereign language of Karnataka, must be used in all official communications and correspondence with NAAC. He urged the department to ensure strict compliance with this requirement by higher education institutions across the state.

In a separate circular, the Department of Collegiate Education also reiterated that obtaining NAAC accreditation is mandatory for colleges seeking grants from the Centre.

Investigate Illegal Entry into Kogilu Layout, Demands MLA Suresh Kumar

BENGALURU

Former minister and senior BJP MLA Suresh Kumar on Thursday demanded a thorough investigation into how people allegedly entered and settled illegally in Kogilu Layout, criticising the state government's move to regularise unauthorised houses in the area.

Suresh Kumar said the government must first establish how the settlements came up, who facilitated them and for how long they had existed before taking any decision on regularisation. "The government itself admits that these houses are illegal. Then the first question is — how did these people enter the layout and who allowed them to stay there?" he asked.

Targeting Congress leader Venugopal, the MLA alleged that the entire issue was being handled with political motives. He claimed the Kogilu Layout decision was being driven by sympathy politics linked to electoral considerations in neighbouring Kerala. "Venugopal is defending himself for political reasons. This is competitive politics, where elections are being prioritised over justice," he alleged.

Suresh Kumar accused the state government of pursuing vote-bank politics by offering houses without proper verification. He said claims that the settlements had existed for 15–20 years were questionable and needed verification. "Legalising something illegal is itself an illegal policy. This move causes injustice to the real victims of Karnataka," he said.

Referring to reports that around 300 houses were affected, the MLA said the number of people living there could be much higher. He warned that offering alternative housing without a proper probe would set a dangerous precedent.

Car Hits Cab, Driver Attacked by Youths after Questioning

BENGALURU

A cab driver was assaulted by a group of intoxicated youths after he questioned them about their car hitting his vehicle near Corporation Circle in the early hours of Thursday. The incident, which occurred around 3.16 am, caused panic among motorists in the busy central business district.

According to police, the cab was parked near Corporation Circle when a car carrying several youths rammed into it from behind. When the cab driver objected and questioned the driver of the car, the youths allegedly began abusing him using obscene language in Hindi. The verbal altercation soon escalated into a violent confrontation. Eyewitnesses said the youths, numbering more than ten, turned aggressive and attempted to attack other drivers who tried to intervene and defuse the situation.

Woman killed in accident on return from temple

BENGALURU

A tragic accident claimed the life of a woman as her family was returning from a temple on the New Year. Ashwini, a resident of Thore Mudalapalya, died after being hit by a car near Lakkenahalli on the Nelamangala-Mangalore National Highway on Thursday morning.

Ashwini and her husband Ramesh were riding their bike with their second son after performing puja at a temple near Gudemaranahalli hand post. An overspeeding Eco car reportedly lost control, overturned, and struck the divider, which in turn hit the bike.

Ashwini suffered severe head injuries and died due to heavy bleeding, while Ramesh and their son Yavan escaped unharmed. The couple had been married for eight years and had two children. Police have registered a case, and the vehicle involved has been seized for further investigation into the incident.

ALLOTMENT CONTROVERSY

Yatnal Slams Govt over Housing Allotment Controversy

BENGALURU

BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Thursday launched a sharp attack on Housing Minister B Z Zameer Ahmed Khan and the Congress government, alleging that the allotment of houses in Bengaluru was being carried out with political and demographic motives rather than public welfare.

Reacting to reports of the government providing houses to alleged illegal residents at Kogilu Layout, Yatnal claimed that the minister was not working in the interest of the state or the country. "He does not want a country or a state. He wants his population and voters to increase," Yatnal alleged, accusing the government of appeasement politics.

The Vijayapura MLA further claimed that the issue was being projected along religious lines and alleged that the Congress leadership was prioritising minority appeasement in the name of secularism. He said such decisions were being taken without understanding the concerns of local residents and long-time settlers in Karnataka.

Yatnal alleged that appeasement politics had reached its peak in the state, claiming that houses were being allotted to "non-locals" instead of "original residents and Kannadigas". He further alleged that the government was acting under pressure from the Congress high command and ignoring the interests of people who have lived and worked in Karnataka for decades.

He demanded that the state government conduct a thorough verification of beneficiaries before allotting houses, alleging the presence of illegal immigrants, including Bangladeshis and Rohingyas, in the state. "The government should first investigate who they are and which country they belong to before resettling anyone," he said.

The MLA also said that many people from North Karnataka had migrated to Bengaluru as daily wage labourers over the years and deserved priority in rehabilitation and housing schemes. According to him, the present policy was an insult to Kannadigas and was being strongly opposed by the BJP.

Raising concerns about electoral integrity, Yatnal claimed that fake voters existed in several states and alleged that Karnataka was no exception.

Everyone in Kogilu Layout is from B'desh: Ashwath Narayan

BENGALURU

Former Deputy Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Ashwath Narayan on Thursday alleged that all residents of Kogilu Layout are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, demanding an immediate investigation into the matter. He claimed the presence of over 25 lakh Bangladeshis in Karnataka posed a serious challenge to law and order in the state.

"Let the government clarify whether this is true or not. The state is witnessing a massive racket. Those living in Kogilu Layout are not our countrymen at all," Ashwath Narayan said, urging authorities to identify and deport illegal immigrants. He added that these individuals had entered Karnataka via West Bengal, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh, highlighting what he described as a "mini Bangladesh" being created in Bengaluru.

The former Deputy CM criticised the government's plan to provide housing to the residents, calling it illegal and unconstitutional.

Satish Babu Launches 37th National Road Safety Week

Regional Transport Officer Satish Babu urged motorists to strictly follow traffic rules while inaugurating Road Safety Week

RAMANAGARA

Emphasising the importance of strict adherence to traffic rules to prevent road accidents, Regional Transport Officer (RTO) Satish Babu called upon vehicle owners and drivers to act responsibly and prioritise road safety. He was speaking after inaugurating the 37th National Road Safety Week at the RTO office in Ramanagara on Thursday.

The Road Safety Week is being jointly organised by the Bengaluru South district administration, District Legal Services Authority, district police, Road Safety Committee, and the Regional Transport Office.

Addressing the gathering, Satish Babu said that the National Road Safety Week is observed every year as per government directions, with the objective of reducing road accidents and minimising loss of lives through sustained awareness programmes.

He explained that, as part of the month-long observance, various awareness activities would be conducted to educate drivers and vehicle owners about traffic regulations and safe driving practices. The ultimate goal is to significantly reduce road accidents and fatalities. Road safety is not just the responsibility of authorities but of every citizen, he said.

Highlighting public behaviour during accidents, Satish Babu noted that people often gather at accident spots to take photos or videos instead of helping victims. He urged citizens to come forward to assist the injured without hesitation. He pointed out that many people fear legal complications, police inquiries, or financial burden, which prevents them from offering immediate help.

To address these concerns, he said, amendments have been made under Section 134A of the Central Motor Vehicles Act, 1998, to protect and encourage Good Samaritans. Anyone who helps accident victims is legally recognised as a life saver and is protected from harassment.

He further explained that under the national Rah-Veer scheme, 10 national-level awards are given every year with cash incentives of up to ₹1 lakh. At the district level, life savers are eligible for cash rewards of up to ₹25,000.

National Best Family Physician Award Conferred on Dr K.G. Kulkarni

KOPPAL

Senior physician Dr K.G. Kulkarni of Koppal was honoured nationally for over five decades of dedicated service

Veteran physician Dr K.G. Kulkarni, a respected and widely admired medical practitioner from Koppal, has been conferred with the prestigious National Best Family Physician Award in recognition of his exemplary service in the medical field spanning nearly 54 years. The honour, regarded as the only national-level award of its kind, is presented by the central branch of the Indian Medical Association to doctors who have rendered outstanding service in family medicine.

The award was presented at the National Medical Conference held in Ahmedabad. Dr Kulkarni was honoured for his lifelong commitment to patient care, ethical medical practice, and his deep engagement in both medical and social service activities. Over the decades, he has earned immense love and trust from the general public, becoming a household name for compassionate and dependable healthcare in Koppal and surrounding regions.

The award ceremony was attended by several eminent personalities from across the country. Notable among them were Bhupendra Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat; Sharad Kumar Agarwal, National President of the Indian Medical Association; and Ketan Desai, former President of the World Medical Association. Their presence added prestige to the occasion, which celebrated excellence and service in the healthcare profession.

Dr Kulkarni's career is marked not only by clinical excellence but also by his active involvement in social causes and community welfare. Known for his simplicity, accessibility, and patient-first approach, he has treated generations of families and played a vital role in strengthening primary healthcare at the grassroots level. His dedication has inspired many young doctors to pursue medicine with compassion and integrity.

The conferment of this national honour has triggered widespread joy and pride in Koppal. Several organisations, including the Rotary Club of Koppal and the Inner Wheel Club, along with numerous social organisations, extended heartfelt congratulations to Dr Kulkarni. Public representatives, political leaders, and office-bearers of various associations also expressed happiness and lauded his achievement, describing it as a proud moment for the entire district.

Final Electoral Roll Published for K'taka West Graduates'

GADAG

The final electoral roll for the Karnataka Legislative Council's West Graduates' Constituency has been published in accordance with the schedule issued by the Election Commission of India. The voters' list has been prepared with reference to November 1, 2025, as the qualifying date, officials announced on January 1.

As per the prescribed process, the draft electoral roll for the West Graduates' Constituency was published on November 25, 2025. Following this, eligible voters were given an opportunity to file claims and objections between November 25 and December 10, 2025. During this period, applications received from graduates seeking inclusion, correction, or deletion of names were carefully examined by the authorities.

After scrutiny of all valid claims and objections, the final electoral roll was published on December 30, 2025. The final list will be available for public inspection at the offices of the voter registration authorities, including the Regional Commissioner of Belagavi Division, and the Assistant Electoral Registration Officers, who are the Deputy Commissioners of Dharwad, Gadag, Haveri and Uttara Kannada. The electoral roll is also accessible at the offices of all designated officers within their respective jurisdictions.

In addition, voters can view the final list online on the website of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka, as well as on the official website of the Regional Commissioner, Belagavi Division. Officials have encouraged graduates to verify their details to ensure accuracy ahead of the election process.

According to the published data, the final electoral roll of the West Graduates' Constituency comprises a total of 88,087 voters. This includes 51,599 male voters and 36,488 female voters, reflecting a significant and active electorate across the four districts covered under the constituency.

The authorities have also clarified that eligible graduates whose names may have been inadvertently left out of the final list still have an opportunity to apply for inclusion. Such applications can be submitted up to ten days prior to the last date for filing nominations by candidates contesting the election.

Vishwakarma Community's Immense Contribution

CHITRADURGA

The Vishwakarma community's indispensable role in human life and Indian civilisation was highlighted during the Amarashilpi Jakanachari Memorial Day celebrations held in Chitradurga on January 1. Addressing the gathering, sculptor C.R. Suresh, General Secretary of the District Vishwakarma Samaj, stated that from birth to death, human life depends on the skills and services of the Vishwakarma community, which has served society selflessly beyond caste and religious distinctions.

The memorial programme was organised at the District Collector's Office auditorium by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and Chitradurga City Municipal Council. Speaking on the occasion, C.R. Suresh said sculpture and architecture form the backbone of Indian culture, and the artistic grandeur of temples across the country stands as testimony to the tireless efforts of generations of sculptors. Among them, Amarashilpi Jakanachari holds a unique and revered position, he said.

He noted that although India has produced countless sculptors, Jakanachari alone is revered as an Amarashilpi for his unmatched mastery. A native of Karnataka, Jakanachari gifted the world the distinctive Hoysala style of sculpture, which remains a benchmark in stone craftsmanship and architectural excellence.

CMFRI Leads Swachhata Drive, Announces Cooperative Courses

MANGALURU

Mangaluru on January 1 witnessed a series of significant public, institutional and cultural activities, reflecting the city's active engagement in cleanliness, education, governance and heritage preservation.

As part of the nationwide Swachhata Pakhwada campaign under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the Mangaluru Regional Centre of the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) organised a fortnight-long cleanliness drive across its campus and at Tannirbhavi Beach. The initiative focused on environmental sanitation, responsible resource use and sustainable waste management practices. The programme commenced with a cleanliness pledge administered by the Director of CMFRI through video conferencing. Awareness messages were widely shared through institutional social media platforms, while information, education and communication materials were prominently displayed at the institute entrance and beach locations. Special emphasis was placed on the proper disposal of single-use plastics, tea cups and other commonly used materials. Internal cleanliness measures included disposal of unused equipment, cleaning of office corridors and premises, inspection of housekeeping services and removal of unwanted materials and excess vegetation to maintain a clean, green and healthy institutional environment. Recognising the growing impact of plastic pollution on coastal ecosystems, fisheries and local communities, a community-driven beach cleaning programme was organised at Tannirbhavi. The initiative was led by Regional Centre Head Dr. Sujitha Thomas, with participation from senior scientists and staff.

Meanwhile, Speaker U. T. Khader and District In-charge Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao expressed deep condolences over the demise of eminent educationist and entrepreneur Vinay Hegde. They described his passing as an irreparable loss to the state, recalling his immense contribution to education, industry and social harmony in coastal Karnataka. In another key announcement, applications were invited for a six-month regular and distance education Diploma in Cooperative Management for candidates from Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Kasaragod districts. The course aims to strengthen employment prospects in cooperative banks, milk unions and allied institutions, while also supporting competitive examinations and mandatory qualifications for cooperative staff.

NAME CHANGE

I, ARFATH ARA, W/o Naveed Pasha, resident of No.34-35, 2nd Main, 2nd Cross, Jamia Masjid Road, Gangondanahalli, Nayandahalli, Bangalore-560039, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED ASLAM PASHA**, vide affidavit dated: 29.12.2025, before Notary PRAKASHA.C, Bengaluru

NAME CHANGE

I, **MOHAMED ASLAM PASHA**, S/o Mohammed Yousuf, resident of No.503, 2nd Cross, Eshwara Temple, Near Darurul Mohamedya, Gongondanahalli, Nayandahalli Post, Nayandahalli, Bangalore-560039, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED ASLAM PASHA**, vide affidavit dated: 29.12.2025, before Notary PRAKASHA.C, Bengaluru

CHANGE OF NAME

I, TARZ alias TARZ SALMA W/o MARIMUTHU PANDIYAN, R/o A 104, Malibu Enclave, Manipal County Road, Near Sumadhura Serene Apartment, Aishwarya Crystal Layout, Singasandra, Anekal, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560068, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as TARZ SALMA MARIMUTHU.

ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರ

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ನಗರ, ದರ್ಗಾಮೊಹಲ್ಲಾ, ಟೆಲಿಫೋನ್ ಎಕ್ಸ್‌ಚೇಂಜ್ ಹತ್ತಿರ, ಮನೆ ನಂ: 3300 ರಲ್ಲಿ ವಾಸವಾಗಿರುವ ಶೇಕ್ ಅಬ್ದುಲ್ಲಾ ರವರ ಮಗನಾದ ಸುಮಾರು 59 ವರ್ಷ ವಯಸ್ಸಿನ ಶ್ರೀ. ಅಮ್ಜದ್ ಪಾಷ (ಆಧಾರ್ ನಂ.: 6970 3289 1435) ಆದ ನಾನು ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಪ್ರಮಾಣೀಕರಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ, ನಾನು ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ವಿಳಾಸದಲ್ಲಿ ಖಾಯಂ ವಾಸವಾಗಿರುತ್ತೇನೆ ಈ ಮೂಲಕ ಪ್ರಮಾಣೀಕರಿಸುವುದೇನೆಂದರೆ ಅಬ್ದುಲ್ ಪಾಷ ಆದ ನಾನು ದಿನಾಂಕ 14.11.2007 ರಂದು ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ಗಂಗಮ್ಮ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ ರಾಮಾಂಜಿನಪ್ಪ ಮತ್ತು ಶ್ರೀಮತಿ. ಆಂಜಿನಮ್ಮ ರವರಿಂದ ಶುದ್ಧ ಕ್ರಯಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಇದೇ ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ ಉಪನೋಂದಣಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಚೇರಿಯ 1ನೇ ಪುಸ್ತಕದ ದಸ್ತಾ ವೇಜು ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 05423-2007-08 ಆಗಿ ಸಿ.ಡಿ. ನಂಬರ್ ಡಿ.ಬಿ.ಪಿ.ಡಿ.132 ನೇ ರಲ್ಲಿ ದಿನಾಂಕ 14.11.2007ರಂದು ನೋಂದಾಯಿಸಲಾದ ಪತ್ರವು ದಿನಾಂಕ 25.10.2025 ರಂದು ನಮ್ಮ ಮನೆಯ ನವೀಕರಣದ ಸಮಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಆಕಸ್ಮಿಕವಾಗಿ ಕಳೆದು ಹೋಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಈಗ ಸದರಿ ವಿಚಾರವಾಗಿ ಸ್ಥಳೀಯ ಠಾಣೆಗೆ ಈ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ದೂರು ದಾಖಲಿಸಲು ಈ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರವನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೇನೆ. ಸದರಿ ವಿಚಾರವಾಗಿ ಏನೇ ತಂಟೆ ತಕರಾರು ಬಂದಲ್ಲಿ ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ನಾನೇ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಜವಾಬ್ದಾರರಾಗಿರುವುದಾಗಿ ಈ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರದ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಅಂಶಗಳು ಸತ್ಯ ಹಾಗೂ ನಂಬುಗೆಗೆ ಅರ್ಹವಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂಬುದಾಗಿ ಈ ಪ್ರಮಾಣ ಪತ್ರದ ಮೂಲಕ ಪ್ರಮಾಣೀಕರಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಸದರಿ ಸತ್ಯಿನ ಪೆಡ್ಡೂಲ್ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡಂತಿದೆ.

ಪೆಡ್ಡೂಲ್

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಗ್ರಾಮಾಂತರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರನಗರ, 4ನೇ ವಾರ್ಡ್, ಕಚೇರಿಪಾಳ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಸೇರಿದ ಮಾಜಿ ಖಾತೆ ನಂ-78/723/4303, ಹಾಲಿ ನಗರಸಭಾ ಖಾತಾ ನಂ: 781, ಆಸ್ತಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 723/4303ರ ಚಕ್ಕುಬಂದಿ: ಪೂರ್ವಕ್ಕೆ-ವೆಂಕಟರಮಣಪ್ಪ ರವರ ಜಂಟಿ ಗೋಡೆ, ಪಶ್ಚಿಮಕ್ಕೆ-ಪನುಮಂತರಾಯಪ್ಪ ಜಂಟಿ ಗೋಡೆ ಉತ್ತರಕ್ಕೆ ಸರ್ಕಾರಿ ಪಾಯ, ದಕ್ಷಿಣಕ್ಕೆ- ಮುತ್ಯಾಲಮ್ಮ ದೇವಾಲಯದ ರಸ್ತೆ.
ಈ ಮದ್ಯೆ ಇರುವ ಈ ಮೇಲ್ಕಂಡ ಸ್ವತ್ತಿನ ಒರಿಜಿನಲ್ ಪ್ರತಿ ಕಳೆದು ಹೋಗಿರುವುದಾಗಿ ತಿಳಿಸುತ್ತೇನೆ.

ಪ್ರಕಾಶ ಸಿ.
ವಕೀಲರು ಹಾಗೂ ನೋಟರಿ, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ
ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17.12.2025, ದೊಡ್ಡಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SUGUNA W/o LATE CHIKKAMARIGOWDA, R/o Raya Sandra, Tungani, Kanakapura, Ramanagar, Karnataka-562117, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as PADMA.

NAME CHANGE

I, Sharifa W/o Late Habibullah, Residing at: No. 92, 1st Cross, Ward No. 23, Tippunagar, Ramanagara Town, Bangalore South District, My name is Sharifa as per my original documents like Ration Card, Aadhar Card, Voter Identity Card. However, in the records of Punjab National Bank, Ramanagara branch where I have a savings account, my name is Sharifa Taj. that the above names Sharifa and Sharifa Taj my names and that I am the person with the above names and that henceforth I will declare with my name as Sharifa. vide affidavite sworn before D. Shivaram, Notary, Ramanagara, on 31-12-2025

CHANGE OF NAME

I, PUNEETH R S/o B RUDRAPPA R/o 45, Main Channel Cross Road, Shamanna Gowda Layout, Ulsoor, Bangalore North, Bangalore, Karnataka-560008, have changed the name of my minor daughter TANYA P aged 5 years and she shall hereafter be known as MONISHA PUNEETH.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, YALLAMMA CHALAGERI alias YALLAMMA S CHALAGERI alias YALLAMMA SHIVALINGAPPA CHALAGERI W/o ROHAN VALTHAJE RAMAKRISHNA, R/o H No 87, Laxmivana, Shirur Park, Behind Khode Hostel, Vidyanagar, Hubli, Hubli Eng College, Dharwad, Karnataka-580031, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AAROHI ROHAN VALTHAJE.

Government of Karnataka
The Executive Engineer, Public Works Department, Hassan Division, Hassan.
No. EE/PWD/HSN/AE-1/2025-26/ DATED: 30.12.2025.

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION NO: 31/2025-26, Dated: 30.12.2025

Tender is invited by the Public Works Department on behalf of the Governor of Karnataka, as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000, Standard Tender Document KW-4 from the eligible registered Contractors of Karnataka PWD Tenders invited through E-Procurement for 03 Works in Arakalagudu Subdivision The minimum Amount put to tender is Rs.159.60 lakhs and maximum Amount put to tender Rs.160.30 lakhs. Last date of Receipt of tender is 09.01.2026 till 4.00 P.M. For more details visit https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in or contact this office through Phone No. 08172-268437 or in person during office hours.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, Hassan Division, Hassan.

ವ್ಯಾಸಾಸಂ೦ಇ/ಹಸನ/ಹಾಸನ/897/ಕೆಎಸ್ ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

Govt of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD DIVISION, SEDAM

No: EE/PWD/Dvn/Sed/TS-1/2025-26/2516 Dated: 30.12.2025

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) Details of Work: 1. Total no of work -06 in under **Sedam** Indent No's are 30021, 29821, 29755, 29341, 0656, 0654, 2.Total no of work -03 in under **Chincholli** Indent No's are 29481, 0652, 0648, Total no of work -07 in under **Chittapur** Indent No's are 31501, 31500, 31499, 31497, 31496, 0682, 0681, 2) Head of Account : Under CM IDP and 3054 SH, MDR maintenance for the year 2025-26. 3) Amount put to tender : Lowest Estimate cost : **Rs.12.97 Lakhs,** Highest Estimate Cost **Rs.995.00 Lakhs,** 4) Eligibility of Contractor : Class-I Contractor and above, 5) Pre Bid Meeting Date : **17.01.2026, Morning 11.30 Hrs**, 6) Date and time for tender Queries of tenders : **19.01.2026 - 17.30 Hrs**, 7) Tender form fee & EMD Amount : Tender Processing fee & EMD as per e-portal, 8) Last date & time for receipt of tenders : **20.01.2026 - 16:00:00 Hrs,** 9) Date & time for Opening of Technical Bid : **21.01.2026 -16:30:00 Hrs**, 10) Date and time for Opening of Financial Bid : **23.01.2026 16:30:00 Hrs**, 11) Communication Address : Office of the Executive Engineer PWD Division, Sedam. 12) Internet Address : **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in,** 13) If any changes for Cancelation : Any Changes and cancelations are done in **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

NOTE : 1) The Undersigned has to power to /Postponement/ Rejecting the tender, 2) If any changes are there in upcoming days these tenders are not published in tender bulletin it should be read in **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** portal.

Sd/- **Executive Engineer**
PWD Divison, Sedam

DIPR/Kalaburagi/921/2025-26/Deshpande Publicity

Altum Credo Home Finance® ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinia, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002. The undersigned is the authorized officer of **Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL).**Under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (The said Act). In exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) of the said Act read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, the authorized officer has issued demand notices under 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the borrower(s) [The "said borrower(s)"], to repay the amounts mentioned in the respective demand notice(s) issued to them that are also given below. In connection with above, notice is hereby given, once again, to the said borrower(s) to pay to **Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL),** within sixty days from the publication of this notice, the amounts indicated herein below, together with further interest as detailed in the said demand notice(s), from the date(s) mentioned below till the date of payment and/or realization, payable under the loan agreement read with other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said borrower(s). As Security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to **Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)** by the said borrower(s) respectively.

Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) Loan Account Number
1. Rekhamma A (applicant), 2. Anjinappa Mariayamma (Co-applicant), LAN- S119202000077
Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA Date
07-11-2025 / Rs. 8,23,128/- (Rupees Eight Lakh Twenty Three Thousand One Hundred Twenty Eight Only) (NPA) on 29-10-2025
Description Of Secured Assets (Immovable Property)
All that piece and parcel of property bearing Property No. 484, E-Swathu No. 151200401000220538, measuring 7.00 x 9.14 Mtrs., i.e., admeasuring 63.98 Sq. Mtrs., situated at Gundagathi Village, under Gundagathi Grama Panchayath, Harapanahalli Taluk, Ballari District, and bounded as under: **East :** Property of Kaliveerappa Veeranna, **West :** Property of Neelappar Koteppa, **South :** Property of Neelappara Revanappa, **North :** Road

Place : Ballari, Karnataka
Date : 02.01.2026

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

Altum Credo Home Finance® ALTUM CREDO HOME FINANCE PRIVATE LTD
Regd. Office: Floor No. 7, Kalpataru Infinia, Wakdewadi, Shivajinagar, Pune - 411005. Maharashtra (India)

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Name of the Borrower(s)/Co-Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) Loan Account Number
1. Manjappa A K (applicant), 2. Lalithamma K S (Co-applicant), LAN- 1192020100197
Demand Notice Date and Amount With NPA Date
07-11-2025 / Rs. 22,05,565/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Five Thousand Five Hundred Sixty Five Only) (NPA) on 29-10-2025
Description Of Secured Assets (Immovable Property)
All that piece and parcel of property bearing Pattana Panchayath No. 035-15-T5, Old Property No. 6398/6213/6219, Site No. 34, measuring East to West 9.144018 Mtrs. and North to South 15.240030 Mtrs., admeasuring in total 139.35 Sq. Mtrs., situated at 7th Ward, near Oxford School, Thunga Badra Badavane, Honnali, and bounded as under: **East :** Site No. 35, **West :** Site No. 33, **South :** Site No. 39, **North :** Pattana Panchayath Road.

Place : Honnali, Karnataka
Date : 02.01.2026

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
Altum Credo Home Finance Pvt. Ltd. (ACHFL)

CH CLASSIFIEDS To place a classified ad contact: 080-41209042

QUICK READ

Tobacco Makers Must Install CCTV From February

NEW DELHI

The government has directed that all manufacturers of chewing tobacco, gutkha, and similar products must install functional CCTV systems on every packing machine starting February 1. Footage must be preserved for at least 24 months. Manufacturers must also report the number and capacity of machines to excise authorities. If a machine is non-functional for 15 or more consecutive days, they can claim duty abatement. The rules apply to pouch-packed products, while other forms like tins will attract duty on assessable value.

India, Pakistan Exchange Prisoner And Fishermen Lists

NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan on Thursday exchanged lists of prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, under the 2008 Consular Access Agreement. India shared details of 391 civil prisoners and 33 fishermen, while Pakistan listed 58 prisoners and 199 fishermen, including 167 Indians who have completed their sentences. India urged Pakistan for their early release, consular access to 35 detainees, and ensured safety and welfare. Since 2014, 2,661 Indian fishermen and 71 civil prisoners have returned, including 500 fishermen and 13 civilians since 2023.

Family Conflicts Turn Deadly In Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh witnessed several tragic cases where family disputes ended in death rather than separation. Police and court records show trust breaking down within households, with private disagreements turning fatal. A chilling case in Sambhal involved Vishal Singhal, who allegedly killed his parents years apart and his ex-wife to claim over Rs 50 crore in insurance. His parents' deaths, in 2017 and April this year, were initially treated as accidents. Experts say such cases highlight how internal family conflicts can spiral into violence.

VP Radhakrishnan, Leaders Extend Warm New Year Wishes

Delhi CM Rekha wished citizens a New Year, urging hope, unity, active participation, and commitment to a prosperous, inclusive, and well-governed capital in 2026

NEW DELHI

Vice President C.P. Radhakrishnan met President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday, exchanging warm greetings for the New Year 2026. He also wished citizens peace, health, and prosperity, hoping the year strengthens India's growth and unity.

Radhakrishnan's greetings follow similar messages from other leaders. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished the nation a happy and prosperous 2026, praying for societal peace, good health, and success in personal and professional lives. Modi highlighted the importance of collective progress and fulfillment for all citizens.

Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended special greetings to farmers, workers, labourers, women, and rural communities. He emphasised the government's efforts to strengthen agriculture, improve rural infrastructure, and raise farmers' incomes under PM Modi's leadership. Chouhan described farmers as the nation's food providers and workers as the backbone of India's economy, stressing that their welfare remains a top priority.

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta also conveyed New Year wishes, calling for hope, positive energy, and steady progress for the capital's citizens. She highlighted the importance of citizen trust and participation in achieving development and good governance. Gupta expressed commitment to public welfare and building an inclusive, strong, and prosperous Delhi in the coming year.

The collective greetings by India's top leaders reflect a shared aspiration for national growth, social harmony, and the well-being of all citizens. The messages emphasise unity, development, and renewed determination to make 2026 a year of progress and prosperity for India. Leaders encouraged citizens to participate actively in nation-building while cherishing hope, health, and happiness in personal and public life.

Rajnath Singh Pays Homage To Khaleda Zia's Legacy

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday visited the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi to pay tribute to former Prime Minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia. During the visit, he signed the Condolence Book and expressed India's sorrow over her passing. Bangladesh High Commissioner Riaz Hamidullah welcomed Singh and highlighted India's condolences on social media. Singh also shared a post, offering thoughts for Zia's family and the people of Bangladesh.

The tributes come as Bangladesh continues to mourn the veteran leader. On Wednesday, thousands gathered at the Namaz-e-Janaza held at the South Plaza of Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban to offer their final respects. The funeral prayer was led by the khatib of Baitul Mukarram National Mosque, with BNP Standing Committee member Nazrul Islam Khan supervising proceedings. Khaleda Zia was laid to rest beside her husband, former President Ziaur Rahman, in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Her passing drew attention from across South Asia, with multiple countries sending senior officials to Dhaka. India's External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar also attended the funeral, demonstrating India's support during the period of mourning.

Earlier, Acting BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman thanked supporters, government officials, and visiting dignitaries who attended the funeral, expressing gratitude for their presence during the family's time of loss.

High Commissioner Hamidullah expressed optimism about the future of India–Bangladesh ties, noting discussions with Rahman and highlighting opportunities for cooperation based on shared interests, pragmatism, and mutual interdependence.

Singh's visit underscores India's engagement with Bangladesh during the nation's period of mourning and reflects the deep historical and diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Pakistan's Textile Industry Faces Severe Economic Crisis

NEW DELHI

Pakistan's textile industry, once a key driver of economic growth, is facing a severe crisis, with factories shutting down due to rising production costs. According to a report, the sector is struggling with structural, economic, and logistical challenges, including collapsing cotton production, high energy tariffs, policy missteps, and a nationwide transport strike. The Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) reported that textile exports have fallen for the fourth consecutive month. PTEA General Secretary Azizullah Goheer said exports, which reached $19.3 billion in FY2021, have slipped to $18 billion, then $17 billion, with a 6.39 per cent drop between July and November 2025 alone. High production costs are making Pakistan less competitive compared to regional rivals such as Bangladesh, India, China, and Vietnam.

Jaishankar's Dhaka Visit Signals Restoring India-Bangladesh Ties

NEW DELHI

Former diplomat Suresh K Goel on Thursday said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Dhaka for former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's funeral is a key step towards normalising India-Bangladesh political dialogue. Goel noted that while the visit may appear as protocol, it carries deeper significance given Zia's role in Bangladesh's political history and India's past engagement with her government. Goel highlighted that India and Bangladesh previously shared a "pleasant and effective relationship," which periodic irritants had strained. He said Jaishankar's remarks during the visit, expressing hope that Zia's vision continues to guide bilateral relations, reflected New Delhi's intent to rebuild a stable and constructive partnership. "We are talking about really establishing a normal political regime and dialogue between the two countries," he said.

Referring to recent political developments following the ousting of Sheikh Hasina, Goel said engagement has become difficult due to rising violence and jihadist influence. He stressed the importance of restoring a political government through free and fair elections and ensuring the safety of all citizens, including people of Indian origin.

During his four-hour visit, Jaishankar met Khaleda Zia's son and BNP acting chairman Tarique Rahman, handing over a condolence letter from Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Guyana Eyes India's Support To Become Healthcare Hub

NEW DELHI

Guyana is aiming to become a healthcare hub in the Caribbean, relying on Indian expertise to strengthen its medical infrastructure, said Guyanese High Commissioner to India Dharamkumar Seeraj. He praised India's robust healthcare system and highlighted growing cooperation between the two countries. Seeraj said that when specialised care is unavailable in Guyana, the government facilitates treatment abroad, with India emerging as a preferred destination due to high-quality medical services and competitive costs. The Ministry of Health supports patients financially, ensuring access to necessary care. Several MoUs and agreements have been signed with Indian institutions, including the National Cancer Institute and other hospitals, offering medical training and sometimes full scholarships to Guyanese students. Seeraj noted that these collaborations are helping to build local expertise while providing options for patients to seek treatment in India. Guyana also plans to develop healthcare tourism, inspired by India's model, and sees its partnership with New Delhi as crucial to this goal. "We expect this arrangement to continue as we build our own healthcare systems, and we want to become a healthcare hub of the Caribbean," Seeraj said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Guyana in November 2024 gave new momentum to bilateral ties. Several healthcare-focused MoUs were signed, covering cooperation in health and pharmaceuticals, regulation and supply of affordable medicines, and the establishment of a Jan Aushadhi Kendra in Guyana to improve access to low-cost medicines for citizens and other CARICOM countries.

Seeraj stressed that India's experience and support will be central to Guyana's vision of providing quality healthcare.

BANGLADESH ELECTIONS, ISI THREATS CHALLENGE INDIA'S NORTHEAST SECURITY

NEW DELHI

India's intelligence agencies have flagged Bangladesh elections and ISI-backed activities as major security challenges for the northeast this year. Reports from the Intelligence Bureau indicate that the deteriorating situation in Bangladesh, combined with election-related tensions, could affect India's border states, including Assam and West Bengal. Bangladesh is scheduled to hold elections on February 12, with the Awami League barred from contesting. The main contest is between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the ISI-backed Jamaat-e-Islami. Officials note that political rhetoric in Bangladesh portrays India as a key adversary, with anti-India narratives being used to win votes. The National Citizen Party (NCP) has also supported this messaging. The Yunus government has reportedly been lenient toward terror groups like Harkat-ul-Jihadi Islamic (HuJI) and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), which are alleged to have backing from the ISI to destabilise India's northeast. Officials point out that maps depicting "Greater Bangladesh" and references to the northeast as 'landlocked' suggest a strategic plan to influence the region.

Op Sindoor Sets New Military Deterrence Benchmarks

NEW DELHI

Experts say Operation Sindoor marked a decisive shift in India's military doctrine and counter-terror posture.

India displayed military strength, advanced technology, indigenous platforms and zero tolerance to terrorism after the Pahalgam attack. Under Operation Sindoor on May 7, Indian forces struck terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They also repelled Pakistan's escalation and hit key airbases without crossing borders. Experts said the operation showed India will respond forcefully to every proven cross-border terror attack. It marked a shift from limited strikes to assured deterrence.

Retired Lieutenant General Kanwal Jeet Singh Dhillon said air defence has become the main weapon of modern warfare. He said Pakistan continues to support terrorism to hide its internal political and economic failures. He noted Pakistan ignored India's rise as a strong economy, democracy and military power. He warned that any future provocation would invite stronger military, economic and diplomatic costs. Lt Gen Dhillon said Operation Sindoor created new global benchmarks in fighting terrorism. For the first time, two nuclear nations fought without crossing the Line of Control. Air defence systems stopped enemy aircraft, missiles and drones using modern technology. He said future wars will be non-contact, driven by cyber, space, electronic and information warfare. Economic disruption and narrative battles will also play major roles. He called for strong information systems and a clear counter-terror policy. India's doctrine, he said, treats terrorists, their groups and sponsors as one. Experts said Operation Sindoor reflects a new India with firm resolve against terrorism. They said it sends a strong message to hostile neighbours and reinforces national security through decisive, measured action across multiple strategic domains.

India, Pakistan Exchange Prisoner And Nuclear Facility Lists

NEW DELHI

India and Pakistan on Thursday exchanged lists of prisoners, fishermen, and nuclear installations through diplomatic channels in New Delhi and Islamabad, under the 2008 Consular Access Agreement. India urged Pakistan to release and repatriate 167 Indian fishermen and civil prisoners who have completed their sentences and provide consular access to 35 detainees believed to be Indian.

India shared details of 391 civil prisoners and 33 fishermen in its custody who are Pakistani or believed to be Pakistani. Pakistan provided lists of 58 civil prisoners and 199 fishermen who are Indian or believed to be Indian. The MEA emphasised that India requested Pakistan to ensure the safety, security, and welfare of all Indian and believed-to-be-Indian prisoners and fishermen pending their return.

Since 2014, 2,661 Indian fishermen and 71 civil prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan, including 500 fishermen and 13 civilians since 2023. The exchanges are part of annual procedures held every January 1 and July 1 to maintain dialogue and transparency between the two neighbours.

In addition, the two countries exchanged lists of nuclear installations and facilities under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities, originally signed on December 31, 1988. This marks the 35th consecutive exchange since the first in January 1992.

AI SKILLS

President Murmu Launches Skill The Nation AI Challenge

NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Thursday launched the SkillTheNation AI Challenge and virtually inaugurated the IGNOU Regional Centre and Skill Centre at Rairangpur in Odisha, highlighting artificial intelligence as a key driver of inclusive growth. Speaking at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, she said AI is reshaping societies and economies worldwide, influencing how people learn, work, and access services. For India, a young and dynamic country, AI represents an opportunity to drive positive change and inclusive development.

The President expressed appreciation for students preparing themselves for an AI-driven future and urged them to use their skills to serve society, solve challenges, and empower others. She also acknowledged Members of Parliament who completed AI learning modules, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and leadership in the digital era. President Murmu emphasised that AI will be crucial in boosting India's GDP, employment, and productivity over the coming decade. She highlighted the need for expertise in areas such as data science, AI engineering, and data analytics to build a strong national talent pool. She noted that the government, working with institutions, industry, and academia, aims not only to adopt advanced technologies but also to promote responsible and inclusive use of AI. President Murmu called for collective effort toward making India a knowledge superpower and achieving the goals of the National Education Policy.

The launch is part of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship's ongoing initiatives to equip India's workforce for an AI-driven future. The program reflects the government's focus on fostering innovation, skill development, and technology-led growth to ensure India's progress in the global digital economy.

QUICK READ

ACB Arrests Rajasthan Officials In Bribery Cases

JAIPUR

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Thursday arrested two senior officials in separate bribery cases in Rajasthan. In Sawai Madhopur, Senior Assistant Suryaprakash Nama of the District Industries Centre was caught red-handed accepting Rs 25,000 from a complainant. He had demanded the bribe in exchange for depositing subsidy amounts under the Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Dalit Incentive Scheme. In Sikar, Head Constable Rajesh Kumar was arrested accepting Rs 10,000 from a complainant. Both cases are under investigation under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

J&K Crime Branch Charges Accused In Fake Appointments

SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir Crime Branch has filed a chargesheet against two people involved in issuing fake appointment orders in the Agriculture Department. The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) submitted the chargesheet to the Judicial Magistrate 1st Class, Chadoora, Budgam, under IPC sections 420, 467, 468, 471, 511, and 120-B. The accused, Showkat Ahmad Hajam of Budgam and Irshad Ahmad Ahanger of Pulwama, allegedly tried to cheat job aspirants using forged appointment orders. The case began after a woman attempted to join with a fake order in 2019.

One Dies, Twelve Fall Sick After Party

MEDCHAL | MALKAJGIRI

A New Year's celebration in Bhavani Nagar turned tragic when one man died and 12 others were hospitalised after eating chicken and fish they had cooked themselves. The deceased, 53-year-old Pandu, and the others all belong to the same colony. According to police, after the party, several people fell ill due to suspected food poisoning. The hospitalised individuals are currently stable. Jagathgiri Gutta police have registered a case and are investigating the incident to determine the exact cause.

TMC Alleges Aggressive CEC Fails To Address SIR Issues

The EC told TMC that staff intimidation won't be tolerated and urged releasing BLO honorariums promptly

NEW DELHI

Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Abhishek Banerjee accused Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar of being "aggressive" and failing to answer queries on West Bengal's ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. After a meeting with the Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday, Banerjee said the TMC would not accept the final voter list if discrepancies remained and would challenge it legally.

Banerjee alleged that most questions raised by the TMC regarding deletions, summoning of 1.36 crore voters, and alleged "vote chori" were either ignored or redirected. He criticized the retroactive introduction of "logical discrepancies" and questioned the alleged targeting of West Bengal through claims of infiltration. The TMC delegation demanded clarity on the deletion of 58 lakh names and alleged a conspiracy to malign the state.

The EC, however, informed the TMC that intimidation of electoral staff would not be tolerated and urged the West Bengal government to release enhanced honorarium to BLOs. Officials also said polling stations would be set up in high-rises, gated communities, and slums to facilitate voting.

The meeting involved a 10-member TMC team, including Derek O'Brien, Saket Gokhale, Ritabrata Banerjee, and West Bengal ministers. Meanwhile, the West Bengal Chief Electoral Officer's office dismissed complaints against EC officials as "premeditated and unsubstantiated" after the death of an 82-year-old man, allegedly anxious over SIR notices.

The office affirmed that election staff remain committed to performing their duties with integrity despite criticism.

"Akhilesh Yadav criticizes BJP as residents die from contaminated water despite Indore's award-winning status"

Akhilesh Backs Mamata, Slams BJP Over Election Conspiracies

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday expressed confidence that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will win the 2026 Assembly elections by a large margin, dismissing any BJP "conspiracy" to influence results. Speaking in Lucknow, he said the BJP will first lose in Bengal and later in Uttar Pradesh in 2027.

Akhilesh also criticized UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, claiming he pressured Election Commission officials regarding discrepancies in the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of voter lists. He emphasized that the EC must ensure credibility, warning that any mismatch between state data and SIR records could undermine the revision process.

The political temperature in West Bengal has risen ahead of next year's elections. Union Minister Amit Shah accused Mamata's government of promoting "fear and corruption" and questioned her over alleged illegal immigrant infiltration. Mamata responded by calling Shah "Dushasana" and reaffirmed her commitment to the TMC's ideology of Ma-Mati-Manush.

As the SIR process unfolds in UP, the draft electoral roll will be published on January 6, followed by claims and objections until February 6. The final electoral roll will be released on March 6. Akhilesh's statements underline the growing electoral tensions in both Bengal and Uttar Pradesh as parties gear up for upcoming polls.

> Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav sharply criticized the BJP-led Madhya Pradesh government over Indore's water contamination, questioning cleanliness awards and river rejuvenation claims, after multiple deaths and illnesses in Bhagirathpura. He called the tragedy shocking in a city lauded as India's cleanest, accusing the BJP of avoiding accountability.

Man Dies After SIR Hearing In Bengal's Swarupnagar

KOLKATA

A 60-year-old man, Sultan Sardar, died on Thursday following a heart attack, four days after attending a hearing related to the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process in Swarupnagar, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal.Sultan, a long-time resident of the area, had recently received a notice to appear at the Swarupnagar Block Development Office regarding discrepancies in his identity documents. His name was reportedly missing from the 2002 voter list of West Bengal. Family members said the elderly man became extremely anxious during the hearing when officials pointed out issues with his papers.

The incident occurred in Swarupda village under Swarupnagar police station limits. According to relatives, Sultan suffered a cardiac arrest at home on Thursday morning and was pronounced dead. His family expressed concern over the stress caused by the SIR process, highlighting the challenges faced by senior citizens when summoned for verification of voter documents.

Confusion Over Indore Water Contamination Deaths

INDORE

Conflicting reports emerge on the death toll from contaminated water in Indore, with locals, CM, and Mayor providing different figures. Authorities continue investigation and restore water supply.

Indore is grappling with uncertainty over deaths caused by contaminated water in Bhagirathpura. Residents claim 13 fatalities, including a six-month-old, while Chief Minister Mohan Yadav confirmed four deaths, and Mayor Pushyamitra Bhargava cited seven. Cases of diarrhoea and vomiting were first reported a week ago, affecting around 1,400–1,500 people, with 200 hospitalised. Officials said all admitted patients are recovering and being discharged.

Preliminary investigation revealed that leakage allowed drainage water to enter the drinking water pipeline, triggering the outbreak. The area falls under the Indore-1 assembly constituency of Urban Development Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya, who stated that officials are verifying the actual death toll. He assured that financial aid would be provided to families if additional deaths are confirmed, as announced by CM Yadav. Additional Chief Secretary Sanjay Dubey visited the affected area with local officials to assess the situation. Authorities repaired the water pipeline and restored the supply on Thursday. Water samples were collected from households and sent for testing to ensure safety.

The conflicting death figures highlight gaps in information, with residents insisting more lives were lost than officially reported. Local administration continues to investigate and monitor the health of affected residents. Officials urge citizens to report symptoms promptly and ensure safe drinking water at homes.

Punjab Police Busts Organised Gang, Seizes Weapons, Arrests

CHANDIGARH

In a major breakthrough, Punjab Police has busted an organised crime gang, arrested nine accused involved in murder, extortion, and target killings, and recovered several weapons, officials said on Thursday. The accused are part of a well-structured criminal network and were allegedly planning a serious offence, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav confirmed.

According to the DGP, Patiala Police recovered nine .32 bore pistols and one PX5 .30 bore pistol from the gang. An FIR has been registered, and further investigation is underway to unravel the gang's activities and connections. Authorities stressed that Punjab Police remains committed to dismantling organised crime networks to maintain peace and public safety across the state.

The arrests come amid a sustained campaign against narcotics in Punjab, part of the Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann-led "Yudh Nashian Virudh" initiative. On December 31, over 1,000 officers conducted multiple raids in a single day, persuading 46 individuals to undergo de-addiction treatment. In the 304-day campaign, 113 drug smugglers were arrested, 82 FIRs registered, and a total of 42,480 smugglers apprehended.

The operations also led to the recovery of 455 grams of heroin, 25 kg of poppy husk, 1,995 intoxicant tablets or capsules, and Rs 54,440 in drug money. The police emphasised that focused raids, search operations, and awareness initiatives remain ongoing to eradicate drugs and ensure law and order throughout Punjab.

Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor Assumes Vice Chief Air Staff

NEW DELHI

Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, VM took charge as Vice Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force on Thursday, the Ministry of Defence announced. He succeeded Air Marshal Narmdeshwar Tiwari, who retired after 40 years of distinguished service.

A graduate of the National Defence Academy in December 1985, Air Marshal Kapoor was commissioned into the fighter stream of the Flying Branch on December 6, 1986. He is an experienced fighter pilot, qualified flying instructor, and Fighter Combat Leader. Over his career, he has flown all variants of the MiG-21 and MiG-29, accumulating over 3,400 hours on combat and trainer aircraft.

Air Marshal Kapoor has served in operational, instructional, command, and staff roles.

His key operational tenures include commanding a fighter squadron in the Central Sector, serving as Station Commander of a Western Sector flying base, and Air Officer Commanding of a premier air base. His instructional roles include Chief Instructor (Flying) at the Air Force Academy and Directing Staff at the Defence Services Staff College. He also contributed to the induction of the PC-7 Mk II aircraft into the IAF.

His diplomatic experience includes serving as Defence Attache to Pakistan. Senior staff roles include Assistant Chief of Air Staff Operations (Strategy), Air Defence Commander at South Western Air Command, and Air Officer-in-Charge Personnel at Air Headquarters.

Prior to this appointment, he served as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Training Command and South Western Air Command.

In recognition of his distinguished service, he has been awarded the Vayu Sena Medal (2008), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2022), and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal and Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal (2025).

Indian Army Intensifies Winter Operations In Pir Panjal

POONCH

The Romeo Force of the Indian Army has stepped up search and surveillance operations in the Pir Panjal ranges of Poonch district, Jammu and Kashmir, amid heavy snowfall and extreme cold. Troops are operating at altitudes above 13,000 feet, navigating snowbound mountains and challenging terrain while maintaining constant communication to monitor suspected areas. Army personnel, equipped with specialised winter gear, are conducting coordinated exercises along the border as a precautionary measure. Simultaneously, counterterrorism operations have been intensified in Kishtwar and Doda districts, with units patrolling frozen forests and mountain caves to neutralise potential threats before the harsh winter fully sets in. Despite the onset of Chillai Kalan, Kashmir's harshest winter phase from December 21 to January 31, the Army has maintained a proactive approach. Temporary bases and surveillance posts have been established deep within snow-covered areas to prevent terrorists from exploiting isolated mountain regions for concealment.

FOOD SAFETY

FSSAI MANDATES SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE FOR FOOD

NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has directed food producers to submit scientific evidence in a standardised format to support claims about their products. The move follows findings that many previous submissions lacked proper data or structure, making accurate risk assessments difficult.

Under the new guidelines, all stakeholders seeking food safety reviews or changes in standards must provide detailed information, including domestic dietary consumption of the product, nutritional content, acceptable intake limits, allergy risks, and toxicology reports. Submissions must also outline testing methods and the laboratories used for analysis.

The FSSAI, which regulates food manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import, stated that the standardised format will help scientific panels and committees conduct risk assessments according to the 2016 regulations for its Scientific Committee and Scientific Panel. This will ensure decisions on food safety are based on reliable scientific evidence.

Representations for new or existing food products will be reviewed by the FSSAI's Science and Standards Division. The regulator has assured that all data submitted will remain confidential and used solely for scientific evaluation, standard-setting, and policy-making purposes.

This step aims to make the food safety review process more transparent, consistent, and reliable, helping ensure that consumers have access to safe and wholesome food.

By requiring comprehensive scientific documentation, the FSSAI hopes to prevent misleading claims and strengthen regulatory oversight across India's food industry.

QUICK READ

Afghanistan Hit by Series of Recent Earthquakes

KABUL

Afghanistan experienced another earthquake on Thursday, measuring 4.5 in magnitude at a depth of 113 km, the National Center for Seismology (NCS) reported. This follows quakes of magnitudes 4.1 and 4.0 on December 29 and 27, respectively. The country, especially the Hindu Kush region, lies in a highly active seismic zone. Repeated tremors worsen conditions for communities already affected by conflict and limited development. Past earthquakes, including a 6.3-magnitude quake in November, caused deaths, injuries, and significant damage.

Baloch Youth Disappears Amid Pakistan HR Crisis

BALOCHISTAN

Another case of alleged enforced disappearance has emerged in Balochistan's Kech district. Yasir, son of Nasir, was reportedly taken during a late-night operation in Gowak area of Mand between Tuesday and Wednesday. Family members lost contact after 3 am, and authorities have given no information about his whereabouts. Rights groups say such disappearances are becoming routine, leaving families in uncertainty. Meanwhile, Mir Zaman Kurd, missing since February 2024, was recently released, highlighting the ongoing human rights crisis.

Trump Hopes for Peace on Earth in New Year

US President Donald Trump celebrated New Year at his Florida resort, sharing his wishes publicly

WASHINGTON DC

US President Donald Trump hosted a grand New Year gala at his Florida resort on Thursday, attended by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife Sara, among others. When asked about his New Year wish, Trump said he hoped for "Peace on Earth," reported Fox News. In his address, he praised his government, claiming the US was "back and strong" and boasting about the hundreds of millions of dollars collected in tariffs.

During the gala, Trump auctioned a painting of Jesus Christ by artist Vanessa Horabuena. The artwork sold for USD 2.75 million, with proceeds going to St. Jude Children's Hospital and a sheriff's department.

Trump also announced that the National Guard would be withdrawn from Chicago, Los Angeles, and Portland, citing reduced crime levels due to their presence. He noted federal forces might return if crime rises in the future, criticising local officials for opposing their deployment. Just a week earlier, the US Supreme Court had blocked the National Guard's deployment in Chicago over objections from Illinois authorities.

Additionally, Trump claimed that tariffs had driven record investment into the US, encouraging businesses to establish factories domestically. In a Truth Social post, he said the country set a world record for investment, surpassing China, and emphasised that domestic products face no tariffs, boosting economic growth. Trump concluded by congratulating the nation for its "incredible achievement," underlining his vision of a strong and prosperous United States.

Zelenskyy Rejects Weak Peace, Seeks Strong Agreement

KYIV

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy in his New Year address insists on ending the war without surrender, rejecting weak peace deals and demanding strong agreements that protect the country's sovereignty.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, in his New Year address, stressed that Ukraine wants peace but will not accept any deal undermining its sovereignty. Speaking from his office with a New Year tree behind him, Zelenskyy acknowledged the fatigue of Ukrainians after nearly four years of war but said exhaustion should not be confused with defeat.

He stated, "Peace? Yes. At any cost? No. We want the end of the war but not the end of Ukraine." Zelenskyy warned that weak compromises would only prolong conflict, saying his signature would be placed only on strong agreements that ensure long-term peace.

He highlighted that recent US-led diplomatic efforts brought negotiations close to completion. "A peace agreement is 90 per cent ready; the remaining 10 per cent will decide the fate of Ukraine, Europe, and how people live," he said.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Russia's demand for territorial concessions, particularly in Donbas, is unacceptable, arguing that giving in would invite further aggression. He reinforced Ukraine's resilience, noting Russia has consistently underestimated the country's character.

The president called for peace arrangements that include guarantees to protect independence and prevent future attacks. His address came as US officials held talks with Ukrainian and European advisers to push for a settlement. Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his own New Year message, praising soldiers and warning of a tougher negotiating stance after alleging attacks near his residence.

PAKISTAN ATTEMPTED TO HIGHLIGHT A HANDSHAKE BETWEEN EAM S. JAISHANKAR AND NA SPEAKER IN DHAKA

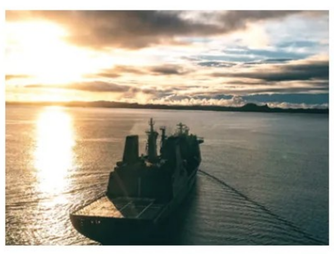
Pakistan Amplifies Handshake, Seeks Talks with India

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's top leadership drew attention on Wednesday by attempting to magnify a brief handshake between Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Pakistan National Assembly Speaker Ayaz Sadiq. The exchange occurred at the funeral of former Bangladesh Prime Minister Khaleda Zia in Dhaka and was largely a courtesy gesture. Pakistan's National Assembly Secretariat issued a press release portraying the handshake as a sign of willingness for dialogue, proposing peace talks and cooperative measures to avoid escalation. The move comes amid strained India-Pakistan relations following the Pahalgam terror attack earlier this year, in which 26 Indian tourists were killed by groups India alleges are Pakistan-backed. India responded with calibrated diplomatic and security measures, including suspension of participation in the Indus Waters Treaty, restricting cross-border transit, and scaling down bilateral engagement to protect national security.

In May 2025, India carried out Operation Sindoor, striking terror camps run by Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. These precision strikes targeted terror infrastructure while repelling Pakistani escalation and safeguarding Indian interests.

India has repeatedly stated that engagement with Pakistan must be based on mutual respect, verifiable security assurances, and a terrorism-free environment. Analysts note that Pakistan's recent emphasis on the handshake and calls for talks reflect attempts to project diplomacy, even as past incidents continue to dominate bilateral ties. Despite Pakistan's overtures, India maintains that dialogue cannot coexist with terrorism, and any meaningful engagement will require concrete action against attacks targeting civilians.



China's Military Drills around Taiwan Spark Global Concern

TAIPEI

China's recent large-scale military exercises surrounding Taiwan have drawn widespread international criticism, raising fears of regional conflict and destabilisation. The two-day drills, which ended on December 31, involved naval fleets, fighter jets, bombers, drones, and amphibious units, including simulated port-seizure operations, according to The Epoch Times.

The European Union, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines expressed serious concern. The European External Action Service stressed that peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait are essential for global security and prosperity, warning against unilateral attempts to alter the status quo.

The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC), comprising lawmakers from democratic countries, condemned the exercises as a deliberate escalation meant to normalise military intimidation.

The group called on democratic governments to adopt practical deterrence measures instead of symbolic responses, cautioning that Beijing's actions indicate growing readiness for conflict.

Pakistan Sees Drop in Terror Attacks after Border Closure

ISLAMABAD

Since closing its border with Afghanistan on October 11 last year, Pakistan has recorded a noticeable decline in cross-border terrorist attacks and related deaths. The closure followed tensions with Kabul over allegations that Afghan soil was being used by terrorists, as per reports.

Data from the Centre for Research and Security Studies (CRSS) shows that terrorist attacks fell by nearly 17 percent in December, following a 9 percent decline in November. Fatalities among civilians and security officials also dropped by around 4 percent and 19 percent respectively during the last quarter of 2025.

Despite this short-term improvement, 2025 remained Pakistan's most violent year in a decade, with overall violence surging by roughly 34 percent. Fatalities rose from 2,555 in 2024 to 3,417 in 2025, an increase of 862 deaths. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) was the worst-hit region, with deaths climbing from 1,620 to 2,331, accounting for over 68 percent of nationwide fatalities and nearly 63 percent of violent incidents. Balochistan also saw a rise, with fatalities increasing from 787 to 956, contributing 28 percent of deaths and over 30 percent of violent incidents.

Violence in Punjab and Sindh remained comparatively low, with just 40 and 56 fatalities respectively, while Gilgit-Baltistan reported the least impact despite a minor increase from one to four deaths.

Experts note that while the border closure has helped reduce cross-border terrorism, long-term efforts are needed to address violence concentrated in northwestern and southwestern provinces. The drop in attacks suggests that stricter border control may be an effective tool, but sustained security measures are essential to improve nationwide stability.

Life-Threatening Bushfire Forces Evacuation near Perth Airport

SYDNEY

Authorities on Thursday morning issued an emergency warning as a life-threatening bushfire burned near Perth Airport in Western Australia. The WA Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) advised residents in Kalamunda, 15 km east of central Perth and 5 km from the airport, to evacuate immediately. The out-of-control fire was moving north, threatening lives and homes. Residents were instructed to leave in a westerly direction if safe, Xinhua reported. DFES warned, "Do not wait and see; leaving at the last minute could put your life in danger." Those stuck in vehicles were advised to use a woollen blanket and stay on the floor to protect against broken windows from intense heat.

People unable to leave were told to shelter in a room with running water and a clear exit, as extreme heat can be deadly even before flames arrive. The affected areas include Kalamunda and neighbouring suburbs Maida Vale and Forrestfield, with a combined population of roughly 25,000, according to the 2021 census.

Power lines in the warning area were down, and several roads were closed, although Perth Airport remained unaffected, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported. Firefighters urged residents to act quickly to survive, emphasising that delaying evacuation could have fatal consequences. The DFES stressed that early action is critical, advising those in danger to follow evacuation or shelter guidelines without delay. Authorities continue to monitor the situation as fire crews battle the blaze and assist with evacuations, highlighting the ongoing risks posed by Australia's bushfire season.

Karachi Street Crime Remains High Despite Police Claims

KARACHI : Despite police claims of reduced crime, Karachi residents continued facing serious street crime threats in 2025, with more than 64,000 incidents reported and over 70 fatalities, as per reports. Official figures from FIRs show 64,323 cases of robbery, mobile phone snatching, and vehicle theft, though the actual number is believed higher as many victims avoid reporting crimes. Comparing with 2024, police data show a drop from 71,105 street crimes to 64,323, a decrease of 6,782 cases. Fatalities linked to such crimes fell from 99 in 2024 to 70 in 2025, while injuries dropped from 400 to 290. Mobile phone snatching declined from 19,353 to 17,706 cases, and vehicle hijackings fell from 8,370 to 6,683, including 302 cars and 6,381 motorcycles. Vehicle thefts also decreased from 43,382 to 39,934.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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	8	2		7		4		3
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	2		1			3		7
	7	4		8			1	
	5			4			2	
5		9		2			7	
	4		9		7			6
7		3	4		8	2		9

1	2	3	6	7	8	9	4	5
5	8	4	2	3	9	7	6	1
9	6	7	1	4	5	3	2	8
3	7	2	4	6	1	5	8	9
6	9	1	5	8	3	2	7	4
4	5	8	7	9	2	6	1	3
8	3	6	9	2	4	1	5	7
2	1	9	8	5	7	4	3	6
7	4	5	3	1	6	8	9	2

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

NEW MAYOR

ZOHRAN MAMDANI BECOMES NEW YORK MAYOR

NEW YORK

Zohran Mamdani, a 34-year-old democratic socialist, was sworn in early Thursday as New York City's 112th mayor, making history as the youngest mayor in over a century. He is also the city's first Muslim and first South Asian mayor. Mamdani, a former Queens-based state assemblyman, rose to prominence on a campaign focused on affordability. His platform included universal childcare, a rent freeze for nearly two million tenants, and making city buses "fast and free," according to CNN. The private swearing-in ceremony took place shortly after midnight at the historic, disused City Hall subway station beneath City Hall Park. Mamdani was joined by his wife, artist Rama Duwaji, and his parents, filmmaker Mira Nair and academic Mahmood Mamdani. New York State Attorney General Letitia James administered the oath.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mamdani described the venue as "a testament to the importance of public transit" and announced Michael Flynn as the next commissioner of the city's Department of Transportation. Improving public transport, expanding bicycle lanes, and redesigning streets for pedestrians are central to his agenda. A public inauguration ceremony is planned later Thursday at City Hall Plaza, with thousands expected. Progressive leaders, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Bernie Sanders, will participate, with Sanders administering the public oath. Supporters will also attend a block party called the "Inauguration of a New Era." While Mamdani's proposals energize progressive voters, plans to tax the wealthy require state approval. His victory comes amid national Democratic debates over affordability and the party's direction ahead of the midterm elections, highlighting his potential influence on shaping future policies.

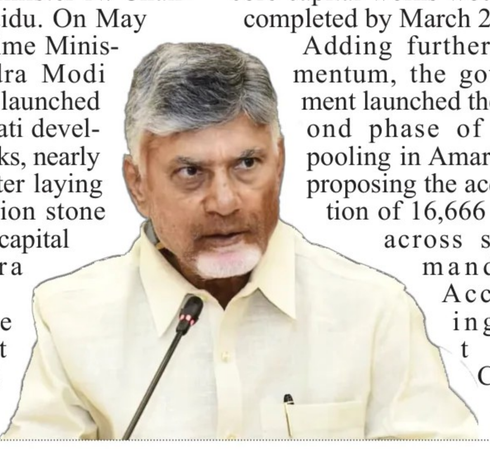
Amaravati Revival and Mega Investments Mark a Turning Point

Andhra Pradesh witnessed transformative momentum in 2025 with capital revival, mega investments, and renewed confidence in governance statewide

AMARAVATI

The year 2025 emerged as a defining phase for Andhra Pradesh, marked by the resumption of long-pending capital development works in Amaravati and a series of major investment announcements that reshaped the State's economic narrative. Among the most significant developments were the relaunch of Amaravati capital works, a landmark investment decision by Google to establish a $15 billion AI data centre in Visakhapatnam, and multiple agreements spanning diverse sectors that underscored renewed investor confidence.

The revival of Amaravati stood out as the most symbolic and politically significant achievement of the year. Fulfilling a key promise made during the 2024 elections, the Telugu Desam Party (TDP)-led coalition government, with support from the BJP-led government at the Centre, restarted work on the ambitious capital city project envisioned by Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. On May 2, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally re-launched the Amaravati development works, nearly a decade after laying the foundation stone for the new capital of Andhra Pradesh.

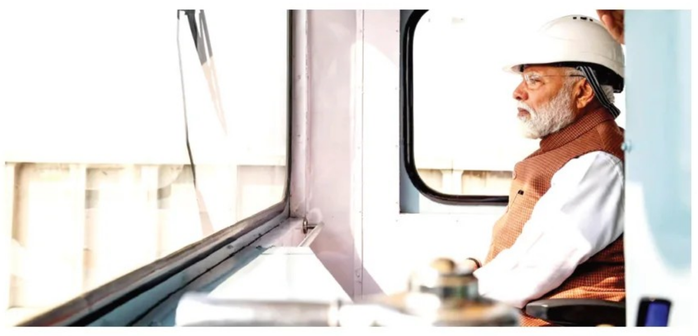


The State government resumed projects worth ₹56,000 crore, including the construction of the High Court, Legislative Assembly, State Secretariat, and four major towers to house Heads of Departments. Expressing confidence in the pace of execution, Chief Minister Naidu stated that the core capital works would be completed by March 2028.

Adding further momentum, the government launched the second phase of land pooling in Amaravati, proposing the acquisition of 16,666 acres across seven mandals. According to the Chief Minister, the existing 29-village footprint was insufficient to develop a metropolitan capital on the scale of Hyderabad, necessitating expansion.

A key administrative milestone was achieved in October with the inauguration of the Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA) office. The seven-storey, state-of-the-art building, constructed in the upcoming administrative core of Amaravati, signaled visible progress on the ground.

Earlier, in November, Chief Minister Naidu, along with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, laid the foundation stone for regional headquarters of 15 public sector banks and insurance companies in Amaravati.



India's First Bullet Train Likely by Aug 15, 2027: Railways Minister

India is poised to enter the high-speed rail era, with its first Bullet Train expected by Independence Day 2027.

NEW DELHI

India is likely to witness a historic milestone in its transportation journey with the introduction of its first Bullet Train by August 15, 2027, according to Union Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. Speaking on Thursday, the Minister indicated that the country would see its first Bullet Train running on tracks next year, marking a significant leap in modern rail infrastructure.

Highlighting the symbolic importance of the project, Vaishnaw remarked that citizens could "buy a Bullet Train ticket on Independence Day in 2027," underlining the government's intent to align the launch with a moment of national pride. He described the upcoming service as a transformational step for Indian Railways, comparable to the impact made by the Vande Bharat Express trains over the past few years.

The Minister noted that the Vande Bharat Express chair car has generated a strong sense of confidence among passengers nationwide. According to him, the modern design, comfort, and safety standards of Vande Bharat trains have been widely appreciated, leading to growing demand from across the country. "Almost every Member of Parliament wants a Vande Bharat train for their constituency," Vaishnaw said, adding that the upcoming Vande Bharat Sleeper version would usher in a new era of overnight rail journeys with similar standards of comfort and efficiency. India's first Bullet Train project, officially known as the Mumbai–Ahmedabad High-Speed Rail corridor, spans 508 kilometres. Of this, 352 kilometres pass through Gujarat and Dadra and Nagar Haveli, while the remaining 156 kilometres fall within Maharashtra. The corridor is designed to connect major urban and industrial centres including Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bharuch, Surat, Vapi, Thane, and Mumbai. Once operational, the Bullet Train is expected to reduce travel time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to nearly two hours, significantly enhancing inter-city mobility and economic integration.

According to the National High-Speed Rail Corporation Limited (NHSRCL), over 85 per cent of the corridor approximately 465 kilometres is being constructed on elevated viaducts, with 326 kilometres already completed.

QUICK READ

Government rolled out key reforms in 2025

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) undertook several policy, regulatory, institutional and technology-driven initiatives in 2025 to further simplify compliance, strengthen corporate governance, and enhance ease of doing business in India, according to an official statement issued on Thursday. The Ministry has raised the threshold limit of paid-up share capital and turnover up to Rs 10 crore and Rs 100 crore respectively for small companies, making more firms eligible for various government incentives and easier loans from financial institutions.

The government also amended the Companies Rules in September 2025 to widen the scope of Fast Track Mergers and Demergers under the Companies Act.

Adani Group doubles down on green power

AHMEDABAD

In December 2025, Chairman of the diversified infrastructure major Adani Group, Gautam Adani, stood in the vast expanse of the Great Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. The landscape was stark. The intent was clear. This was the site of one of India's most ambitious renewable energy projects. The visit was not symbolic -- it reinforced a strategy centred on scale, speed and execution. India's energy challenge is intensifying.

The country is home to the world's second largest population. Its economy is expanding rapidly. Power demand is rising in step. Peak electricity demand grew from around 250 gigawatts (GW) in the financial year (FY) 2025 and is projected to reach nearly 388 GW by FY 2032.

Sri Lanka inflation dips below target, signalling fresh economic worries

COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's inflation stood at 2.1 percent in 2025, well below the central bank's five percent target, raising concerns over weak consumer demand despite signs of macroeconomic stability. The central bank said on Thursday that inflation is expected to "gradually accelerate" in 2026 toward the target range.

The island nation has been recovering from its severe 2022 economic crisis, when depleted foreign exchange reserves triggered shortages of food, fuel and medicines. However, growth momentum has been dented by subdued spending and the impact of Cyclone Ditwah in November, which killed more than 640 people and caused an estimated $4.1 billion in damage.

Maruti Suzuki capped 2025 with record vehicle exports, underscoring India's growing manufacturing strength and global automotive footprint

Maruti Suzuki Sets New Export Record in 2025

MUMBAI

India's largest carmaker, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, on Thursday announced that it exported 3.95 lakh vehicles in calendar year 2025, marking the highest-ever export performance in its history. The achievement represents a robust growth of over 21 per cent compared to 2024, reaffirming the company's leadership in India's passenger vehicle export segment.

Describing the milestone as a moment of pride, Hisashi Takeuchi, Managing Director and CEO of Maruti Suzuki India Limited, said the record performance reflects the strength of India's manufacturing ecosystem and the growing trust of customers across global markets. He noted that achieving such growth at a time when global trade is experiencing uncertainty highlights the resilience of the company's operations and supply chains.

"At a time when global trade is passing through a turbulent phase, we regard this 21 per cent growth as a responsible contribution in supporting the nation's export momentum," Takeuchi said in the company's statement. According to Maruti Suzuki, the latest performance positions it as India's number one passenger vehicle exporter for the fifth consecutive year, consolidating its dominance in overseas markets.

During 2025, the automaker exported as many as 18 different models to over 100 countries, covering regions across Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. The year was also significant as it marked Maruti Suzuki's entry into electric vehicle exports with the commencement of overseas shipments of Suzuki's first Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV), the e VITARA.

Following the flag-off of the BEV from Maruti Suzuki's Hansalpur facility in Gujarat by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in August, the company has already exported more than 13,000 units of the e VITARA to 29 countries. A majority of these exports have been directed towards European markets, signaling strong acceptance of India-made electric vehicles on the global stage. The export milestone comes close on the heels of another major achievement for Maruti Suzuki. In November, the company announced that it had crossed the landmark of 3 crore cumulative car sales in the domestic market.

Gujarat begins 2026 with development push

VIRAMGAM

Marking a development-driven start to the New Year, Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on January 1 laid the foundation stones for Rs 497 crore worth of infrastructure projects across the Viramgam Assembly constituency, covering Viramgam, Mandal and Detroj talukas.

The projects span road infrastructure, railway connectivity and overbridges, aimed at accelerating growth and improving regional connectivity. Addressing a large public gathering, the Chief Minister said the Mandal-Becharaji-Viramgam belt, once characterised by limited resources, rain-dependent agriculture and migration of youth in search of employment, has today transformed into a Special Investment Region (SIR) and an emerging auto hub under the development vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Prime Minister's commitment to the welfare of the last person and the mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas has set new benchmarks of development across the country, Patel said.

PFRDA unveils policy reforms to promote sustainable growth of NPS

NEW DELHI

The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority's (PFRDA) board has approved a framework to permit Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs) to independently set up Pension Funds to manage NPS, with the objective of strengthening the pension ecosystem, it was announced on Thursday. This will enhance competition and safeguard subscriber's interests.The proposed framework seeks to address existing regulatory constraints that had limited bank participation till now, said Ministry of Finance in a statement.

By introducing a clearly defined eligibility criteria based on net worth, market capitalisation and prudential soundness in line with RBI norms, it will ensure that only well-capitalised and systemically robust banks are permitted to sponsor Pension Funds.

"The detailed criteria will be notified separately and will apply to both new and existing Pension Funds," the statement said.

PFRDA has appointed three new Trustees on the Board of NPS Trust, pursuant to the selection process initiated by PFRDA.

These are Dinesh Kumar Khara, Former Chairman, State Bank of India; Swati Anil Kulkarni, Former Executive Vice President, UTI AMC–Trustee; and Dr. Arvind Gupta, Co-Founder and Head, Digital India Foundation and Member of the National Venture Capital Investment Committee under the Fund of Funds Scheme managed by SIDBI.

Khara has also been designated as the Chairperson of the NPS Trust Board. In order to align with evolving realities, aspirations of the public, international benchmarks and the objective of expanding coverage across corporate.

India-Maldives trade records 3-fold jump in last 8 years

NEW DELHI

The bilateral trade between India and the Maldives has grown more than threefold over the last eight years, with India's exports doubling to 680 million in FY 2024–25 and imports from the Maldives taking a huge 20-fold leap to $119 million. Along with the rising flow of Indian tourists to the island nation, the economic-interdependence between the two countries has been steadily growing over the years.

Recently, India–Maldives relations have entered a renewed phase following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Maldives, during

which eight key bilateral agreements were signed. The agreements cover debt relief, reducing the Maldives' annual repayment burden by 40 per cent; a $565 million Line of Credit for infrastructure; UPI–RuPay integration; fisheries cooperation; housing projects; security assistance; climate resilience; and advancing FTA and investment treaty talks, according to an article published in the Maldives Insight news portal.

The report highlights that India's exports, comprising petroleum products, pharmaceutical products, and food goods such as rice, fruits and vegetables, are economic necessities for the island nation. In addition, machinery, electrical equipment, and transport vehicles exported by India play an important role in meeting consumer demand in the Maldives.

While smaller in value, imports from the Maldives hold strategic and economic significance. India primarily imports fish and marine products.

The article states that tourism is the most visible and dynamic bridge between India and the Maldives. It points out that India has consistently ranked among the top countries for tourist arrivals in the Maldives, providing stability and resilience to the tourism-led economy, especially when arrivals from Europe or East Asia fluctuate.

KYV discontinued for cars on new FASTag issued after Feb 1: NHAI

NEW DELHI

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on Thursday announced to discontinue the Know Your Vehicle (KYV) process for cars for all new FASTag issuances, with effect from February 1, 2026.

This is a major step to enhance public convenience and eliminate post-activation harassment faced by highway users of cars, jeeps and vans. This reform will bring significant relief to lakhs of common road users who were facing inconvenience and delays after FASTag activation due to post-issuance KYV requirements, despite having valid vehicle documents, said the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways in a statement.

For existing FASTags already issued to cars, KYV will no longer be mandatory as a routine requirement.

2026 FINANCIAL RULE CHANGES

January 2026 Rules Reshape Salary Structures Nationwide

NEW DELHI

The beginning of the New Year 2026 has brought with it a series of important regulatory and policy changes that directly impact the financial lives of ordinary citizens. From higher government salaries to changes in fuel prices, credit score updates, and tax compliance rules, January 1 has marked a significant transition for households across the country.

One of the most impactful developments is the implementation of the 8th Pay Commission from January 1, 2026. The Union government had approved the move earlier, paving the way for revised pay structures for central government employees. The decision is expected to benefit nearly 50 lakh serving employees and around 69 lakh pensioners. With the rollout of the new pay commission, salaries are likely to rise by 20 to 35 per cent, providing a substantial boost to disposable income and purchasing power for millions of families.

On the price front, however, the New Year has brought mixed news. The government has increased the price of LPG cylinders by ₹111 with effect from January 1, 2026. The hike applies exclusively to 19-kg commercial LPG cylinders, which are commonly used by hotels, restaurants, and small businesses. In a major relief for households, the prices of domestic LPG cylinders weighing 14.2 kg have been kept unchanged, shielding families from additional cooking fuel expenses.

There has also been some respite in fuel prices for vehicle owners and households using piped gas. Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) has revised CNG and PNG rates downward from the New Year. CNG prices have been reduced by ₹3 per kg, while PNG prices have been cut by ₹0.70 per unit. However, consumers should note that the revised rates differ across cities depending on local distribution costs and taxes.

Another significant change concerns credit scores, which play a crucial role in loan approvals and interest rates. Until now, credit scores were updated only once a monh. From 2026 onwards, credit scores will be updated every seven days.

2026: A Sports-Heavy Year Fuelling India's Big Aspirations

Packed calendar, continental Games, and Olympic pathways define a pivotal year ahead

CHENNAI

In sports, there is rarely a pause, and 2026 promises to be relentlessly action-packed for India. From marquee global tournaments to crucial continental Games, the year ahead will test depth, planning and ambition across disciplines. With the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games scheduled within the next 10 months, Indian sport enters a decisive phase that could shape preparations for the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

The year begins at full throttle with the Hockey India League, India Open badminton, the Men's T20 World Cup and the IPL, before seamlessly transitioning into football's grandest spectacle — the FIFA World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico. Add to that the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Asian Games in Nagoya, badminton World Championships, Formula 1, tennis Grand Slams and domestic leagues, and fans will barely have time to breathe.

For India, the Asian and Commonwealth Games carry special weight. The sports ministry, in consultation with the Indian Olympic Association, has decided to send a full-strength contingent to the Asian Games, recognising medal opportunities in both Olympic and non-Olympic disciplines. The truncated Commonwealth Games, featuring just 10 sports, will still offer India strong medal prospects in weightlifting, boxing, athletics, lawn bowls and judo — areas where the country has consistently delivered.

Shooting is expected to be one of India's biggest medal earners. NRAI officials are targeting at least one medal in every Asian Games event, using 2026 as a crucial stepping stone toward LA 2028. Athletics, too, aims to consolidate continental supremacy, with focus on javelin throw and relay events, while expanding competitiveness across sprints, middle-distance and combined events.

Wrestling looks to rebound after a difficult 2025, with long national camps, foreign coaches and the revival of the Pro Wrestling League providing continuity. Badminton and boxing face their own challenges — rebuilding depth in the former and ensuring consistency, especially in men's boxing, in the latter. Archery, buoyed by sustained international success, enters the Asian Games with high expectations, particularly in compound events.

Beyond medals, 2026 will be about systems, maturity and honest assessment. With multiple federations aligning calendars, refining selection policies and strengthening high-performance programmes, the year could define India's sporting trajectory well beyond the immediate podium finishes.

INDIA IN 2026: AT A GLANCE

- **Big Events:** Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, FIFA World Cup
- **Key Medal Sports:** Shooting, athletics, wrestling, boxing, archery
- **Strategic Goal:** Build momentum toward LA 2028
- **Domestic Boost:** Leagues and trials shaping elite depth
- **Expectation:** Strong continental showing, smarter Olympic pathway

Spin the Focus: Australia Pick Spin-Heavy Squad for T20 WC

MELBOURNE

Australia on Thursday named a spin-heavy 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, to be jointly hosted by Sri Lanka and India, underlining their strategy to adapt to subcontinental conditions. The defending champions have leaned heavily on slow bowling options, with Adam Zampa, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Kuhnemann and part-time spin choices forming the core of their attack.

A notable omission is a left-arm pacer, following Mitchell Starc's retirement from T20 internationals late last year. Starc had featured in five of Australia's last six ICC T20 tournaments, missing only one. In his absence, selectors opted for variety in spin and all-round depth rather than outright pace.

The biggest surprise inclusion is young all-rounder Cooper Connolly, who has not featured in Australia's last 12 T20 Internationals. His selection signals a long-term view, especially for conditions expected to assist slower bowlers. Mitchell Marsh will lead the side, supported by experienced campaigners such as Marcus Stoinis, Travis Head and Cameron Green.

Fitness, however, remains a concern for the Australians. A scan on Pat Cummins' back later this month will determine his availability for the tournament. Josh Hazlewood and Tim David are also on the comeback trail after hamstring injuries, though selectors remain hopeful of their recovery before the competition begins. Under ICC regulations, teams are permitted to make squad changes until January 31.

Australia will open their World Cup campaign against Ireland in Colombo on February 11, followed by Zimbabwe on February 13 at the same venue. They then face Sri Lanka in Kandy on February 16 before concluding the group stage against Oman on February 20. All group matches will be played in Sri Lanka, with travel to India scheduled if Australia progress to the Super Eights.

The squad will get match practice in a three-match T20 series against Pakistan later this month.

AUSTRALIA AT T20 WORLD CUP 2026

- **Captain:** Mitchell Marsh
- **Spin options:** Zampa, Maxwell, Kuhnemann, Short
- **Key fitness watch:** Pat Cummins (back)
- **Tournament opener:** vs Ireland, Feb 11 (Colombo)
- **Defending champions:** 2021 winners

Australia squad: Mitchell Marsh (captain), Xavier Bartlett, Cooper Connolly, Pat Cummins, Tim David, Cameron Green, Nathan Ellis, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhnemann, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa.

Ivory Coast, Cameroon Rally as Sudan Advances despite War

CASABLANCA

Defending champion Ivory Coast and five-time winner Cameroon both produced stirring comeback victories as the Africa Cup of Nations group stage concluded, while Sudan advanced to the knockout rounds despite defeat and the ongoing war in their homeland.

Bazoumana Touré struck deep into stoppage time as Ivory Coast overturned a two-goal deficit to beat Gabon 3-2, sealing top spot in Group F. Christopher Opéri delivered the decisive cross for Touré's header and had earlier assisted Evann Guessand's 84th-minute equaliser, with both players coming off the bench as coach Emerse Faé reshuffled to counter Gabon's early dominance. Cameroon also rallied from behind, beating Mozambique 2-1 to finish second in the group. Both Ivory Coast and Cameroon ended on seven points with a goal difference of plus two, but Ivory Coast claimed first place by scoring five goals to Cameroon's four. Mozambique progressed as one of the four best third-placed teams, while Gabon bowed out.

Paris hosts historic derby as PSG meet Paris FC after decades apart

Paris Derby Returns After 36 Years as PSG Face Paris FC

PARIS

After a wait of 36 years, French men's league football finally welcomes back a capital city derby when Paris Saint-Germain host Paris FC on Sunday. It is a uniquely local rivalry too, with PSG's Parc des Princes and PFC's Stade Jean-Bouin separated by just 44 metres, making it one of the closest stadium pairings in top-flight football.

Paris FC earned promotion last season and moved into Stade Jean-Bouin, traditionally a rugby venue, setting the stage for a long-anticipated Parisian showdown. The contest, however, appears mismatched on paper. PSG are the defending French and European champions, while PFC are battling to stay afloat in their debut Ligue 1 campaign, sitting 14th in the 18-team table after losing half their matches.

PFC's attacking spark has largely come from midfielder Ilan Kebbal, their leading scorer with six goals, but he will miss the derby while on Africa Cup of Nations duty with Algeria. PSG, meanwhile, have had to navigate injuries to key forwards Ousmane Dembélé and Désiré Doué. That disruption has shown in the standings, with PSG second behind surprise leaders Lens and already matching last season's total of two league defeats.

The gulf in history and silverware is stark. PSG boast a record 13 French league titles and 16 French Cups, while Paris FC's men's team has never won a league or a major cup. Financial backing reflects that divide too. PSG have been owned by Qatar Sports Investments since 2011 and posted club-record revenue of 837 million euros last season.

Paris FC's recent takeover by the Arnault family of luxury giant LVMH promises intrigue for the future. Antoine Arnault's investment could eventually turn neighbours into genuine rivals. The rivalry will be renewed quickly as well, with the two sides set to meet again in the French Cup on January 12 — proof that Parisian football is finally stirring again.

Real Madrid Star Mbappé Sidelined With Injury

PARIS

Real Madrid forward Kylian Mbappé has been ruled out after suffering an injury to his left knee, the Spanish club confirmed. In a brief statement, Madrid said the France international has been diagnosed with a knee sprain, though the club stopped short of providing a clear timeline for his return.

According to reports, Mbappé is expected to miss at least three weeks of action. The report said the 25-year-old had been managing discomfort for several weeks due to a problem with the lateral ligament in his knee. An MRI scan conducted on Wednesday morning reportedly revealed a lesion that now requires treatment and a period of rest.

Mbappé faces spell on sidelines after MRI reveals knee ligament lesion.

The injury comes at an unfortunate time for both player and club, with Mbappé enjoying a prolific run of form. Earlier this month, he scored his 59th goal of 2025 for Real Madrid, equalling the club record for most goals in a calendar year — a mark previously held by Cristiano Ronaldo. Since joining Madrid from Paris Saint-Germain in the summer of 2024, Mbappé has been a central figure in the team's attack.

This season alone, Mbappé has already netted 29 goals in all competitions, including a league-leading 18 in La Liga, underlining his importance to Carlo Ancelotti's side. His absence is likely to be keenly felt as Madrid look to maintain momentum on multiple fronts.

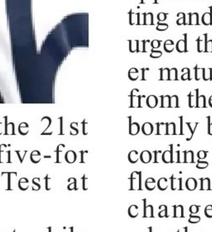
Despite carrying the knee issue, Mbappé was recently seen attending Africa Cup of Nations matches, including the opening game between hosts Morocco and Mali on Friday, followed by the Cameroon versus Ivory Coast clash on Sunday.

Real Madrid's immediate concern will be their upcoming La Liga fixture against Real Betis on Sunday. With Mbappé sidelined, Madrid may need to reshuffle their attacking options as they await further updates on the extent of their star forward's recovery.

Defiant Kramnik Sues FIDE for Defamation in Swiss Civil Court

NEW DELHI

Russian chess great Vladimir Kramnik has filed a defamation lawsuit against world governing body FIDE in a Swiss civil court, escalating an extraordinary dispute that has rocked the global chess community. The former world champion said he was forced to seek legal remedy after what he described as relentless attacks by fellow players and FIDE officials over his allegations of online cheating. Kramnik became the subject of an ethics inquiry by FIDE following his public claims against several players, including American Grandmaster Daniel Naroditsky, who died last year at the age of 29. While the exact cause of Naroditsky's death remains unknown, he had spoken in his final livestream about intense mental stress said to be linked to the accusations. Czech Grandmaster David Navara has also stated that similar allegations by Kramnik left him distressed and suicidal.



END OF BAZBALL?

McCullum, Stokes Face Test after Melbourne 'Lottery' Win

MELBOURNE

Former England captain Michael Vaughan has delivered a blunt warning to head coach Brendon McCullum and skipper Ben Stokes, cautioning that England's Ashes victory at Melbourne should not mask deeper issues within the team. Vaughan described England's Boxing Day Test win at the Melbourne Cricket Ground as a "lottery", insisting the final Test in Sydney will be crucial for the continuation and credibility of the Bazball era.

England's triumph at the MCG was historic, ending a drought of more than 5,000 days without a Test win on Australian soil, their last success coming in 2011. However, the victory came on a highly bowler-friendly surface that produced 36 wickets, all falling to pace, and saw the match conclude inside two days. England had already lost the Ashes after defeats in the first three Tests of the series.

Pacer Josh Tongue emerged as the standout performer, claiming match figures of 7 for 89, including a five-wicket haul in the first innings. He became the first England bowler in the 21st century to take a five-for in a Boxing Day Test at Melbourne.

Vaughan argued that while the win was morale-boosting, it did not represent a "proper Test match", stressing that England must now prove themselves in Sydney by winning a full, competitive contest. He warned that a heavy defeat in the fifth Test would spark serious internal discussions within English cricket, even though McCullum and Stokes are expected to continue in their roles.

Under McCullum, England have won 25 and lost 17 of their 45 Tests, redefining their approach with aggressive batting and bold tactics. Vaughan urged the team to show greater maturity, accept mistakes from the tour, and avoid stubbornly blaming bad luck. According to him, honest self-reflection, rather than constant changes, will determine whether Bazball truly has a sustainable future.

AIFF Requests ISL Clubs to Confirm Participation

All India Football Federation seeks clarity on clubs, format as ISL season faces mounting delays

BENGALURU

With uncertainty continuing over operational costs and the structure of the upcoming Indian Super League (ISL) season, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) has formally asked clubs to confirm their participation and preferred format. The move comes as the federation races against time to meet administrative, legal and regulatory deadlines.

In a letter addressed to ISL clubs, AIFF said it must submit the outcomes of meetings held between the clubs and the federation's Clubs Coordination Committee from December 24 to 30 to the Union sports ministry by January 2. The letter also noted that the Supreme Court is set to resume after its vacation on January 5, 2026, and stakeholders may be required to file documents based on legal advice.

While Jamshedpur FC have already confirmed their participation, Odisha FC remain hesitant, citing sponsor-related challenges. The club has earlier stated that it would not consider taking part without securing an eligible commercial partner, a task made difficult by the limited time available.

Concerns have also intensified following discussions that clubs may need to contribute Rs 2.5 crore each for the season, significantly higher than the Rs 1 crore earlier proposed under AIFF's 20-year plan. Club officials have questioned whether even increased contributions would meaningfully bridge the financial gap. "Even with all the clubs putting in Rs 2.5 crore, we are nowhere close to covering operational costs," said a senior club official.

AIFF has pegged the annual operational budget at Rs 70 crore, but estimates during recent meetings suggested the Goa leg alone could cost around Rs 42 crore. Meanwhile, the federation is preparing to float a revised tender for a new commercial partner after the earlier process failed to attract bidders.

AIFF has also sought confirmation on the competition format to approach the Asian Football Confederation for a possible one-time relaxation on the minimum match requirement for continental eligibility. Most clubs have broadly agreed on a two-conference format with centralised venues in Goa and Kolkata, potentially followed by playoffs to increase matches.

With deadlines looming, clarity from clubs is now crucial for the ISL's revival.

Smriti Mandhana-led India Women visit Mahakaleshwar Temple

UJJAIN

The Indian women's cricket team, led by star batter Smriti Mandhana, began 2026 on a spiritual note by visiting the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh. Fresh from their historic ICC Women's World Cup 2025 triumph, several members of the squad attended the sacred Bhasm Aarti, a revered ritual dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Mandhana, along with Shafali Verma, Renuka Singh Thakur, Sneh Rana, Radha Yadav, and Arundhati Reddy, participated in the early morning prayers, seeking blessings for health, success, and a strong year ahead in international cricket. A video shared on social media captured the team seated quietly, deeply immersed in devotion, while temple priests offered their blessings as per tradition.

The Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, one of the twelve sacred Jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva, holds immense religious significance. The Bhasm Aarti, performed at dawn, draws devotees from across India, and on January 1, the temple saw a large gathering seeking peace and prosperity.

India Women ended 2025 on a high, completing a dominant 5–0 T20I series sweep against Sri Lanka at Thiruvananthapuram. The year also marked a historic milestone with India, under Harmanpreet Kaur's leadership, winning their first-ever ICC Women's ODI World Cup on home soil. Following the triumph, the team maintained momentum, winning series against West Indies, England, and Sri Lanka. Looking ahead, India prepares for a busy 2026, including a T20 World Cup starting June 12.

3 Indians Join FIFA Referees List for 2026

NEW DELHI

Indian football officiating received a significant boost as three more referees, including a woman, were added to the FIFA International List of Match Officials for 2026, the All India Football Federation (AIFF) confirmed. The inclusion takes India's total representation on the elite FIFA list to 19 match officials for the coming year.

Rachana Hasmukhbhai Kamani from Gujarat has been inducted into the FIFA list of women referees, marking another milestone for women officials in Indian football. In the men's category, Ashwin Kumar from Puducherry and Aditya Purkayastha from Delhi earned their places after completing the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Referee Academy course in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Kamani is currently undergoing the same AFC programme, which is designed to prepare referees for international assignments.

Indian officiating gains global recognition as FIFA expands referee roster.

In addition to the three referees, two Indians — Muralitharan Pandurangan of Puducherry and Peter Christopher of Maharashtra — have been named as FIFA Assistant Referees, further strengthening India's presence among global match officials.

According to AIFF, the expanded list reflects sustained efforts to improve refereeing standards through structured education, fitness benchmarks and exposure to high-level competitions. Being part of the FIFA list enables officials to be appointed to international matches, including AFC tournaments and FIFA competitions, subject to selection.

For 2026, India will have eight referees on the FIFA list. They include Venkatesh R, Harish Kundu, Senthil Nathan Sekaran, Crystal John, Ashwin Kumar, Aditya Purkayastha, Ranjita Devi Tekcham and Rachana Kamani. The assistant referees list features Vairamuthu Parasuraman, Sumanta Dutta, Arun Sasidharan Pillai, Ujjal Halder, Muralitharan Pandurangan, Dipesh Manohar Sawant, Sourav Sarkar, Christopher Peter, Riiohlang Dhar and Elangbam Debala Devi. Vishal Mahendrabhai Vaja has been named as India's FIFA futsal referee.

The development underlines India's growing footprint in international football officiating and opens new opportunities for its referees on the global stage.

Young Shanvi Satish Wins Bronze At National hampionship

RAMANAGARA

Ramanagara celebrated a proud moment as 8-year-old Shanvi Satish won a bronze medal at the National Sub-Junior Taekwondo Championship held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, from December 27 to 31. Representing Karnataka in the 25–30 kg weight category for 8–10-year-olds, Shanvi impressed in the sparring event, demonstrating skill, courage, and determination.

Over 450 young athletes from states including Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha, and Kerala participated in the competition. Shanvi advanced confidently through the opening rounds, facing tough bouts in the semifinals before securing the bronze medal. Her achievement is remarkable given her age and experience, especially competing against older opponents, including the 10-year-old gold medalist.

Currently studying in Class 3 at Netaji School, Shanvi has already earned medals internationally, with victories in Dubai, Uzbekistan, Malaysia, and at the Asian Championship, signaling her rising profile in taekwondo. She trains under Indian team coaches Pradeep and Balarajan, who have guided her consistent growth in the sport.

Daughter of Satish, District President of the Government Employees' Association, and Chaitra, Shanvi's success has brought pride to her family and the Ramanagara community. Local officials, including District Commissioner Yashwant Gurukar, Zilla Panchayat CEO Anmol Jain, Superintendent of Police Srinivas Gowda, Additional Deputy Commissioner Chandraiah, and association leaders, congratulated her and wished her continued success in future tournaments.

BCCI to Announce India ODI Squad for New Zealand Series on Jan 3

NEW DELHI

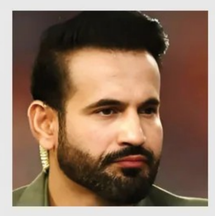
The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will finalise and announce India's ODI squad for the upcoming three-match series against New Zealand on Saturday, January 3. This home series, starting January 11 in Vadodara, offers India a key platform to sharpen their 50-over game ahead of the 2027 World Cup. According to reports, selection committee chief Ajit Agarkar will hold an online meeting with other panel members to confirm the squad. Indian players are scheduled to arrive in Vadodara on January 7, with the first ODI set four days later. Subsequent matches will be played in Rajkot and Indore before both teams shift focus to a five-match T20I series across Nagpur, Raipur, Guwahati, Visakhapatnam, and Thiruvananthapuram.

Kohli, Rohit Power ODI Revival, Spur Irfan Pathan's Call for Tri-Series

NEW DELHI

Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma's selective presence in international cricket has breathed fresh life into the ODI format, prompting former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan to call for longer series and the return of multi-nation tournaments to capitalise on the renewed buzz.

With both stalwarts stepping away from T20Is and Tests, their ODI appearances have become rare, high-value events. Recent bilateral series against Australia and South Africa generated uncommon excitement around 50-over cricket, recalling the fervour of the 2023 ODI World Cup. Fans, broadcasters and boards have all felt the impact of the duo's exclusivity, which has turned each ODI into a marquee occasion.



Building on that momentum, Pathan stressed the need for administrators to rethink ODI scheduling. He advocated five-match series instead of the standard three, while also pushing for tri-series and quadrangular tournaments to sustain fan engagement.

"That's why I am repeatedly saying one thing. Why can't we have five ODIs instead of three? Why can't we have a triangular or quadrangular series?" Pathan said. "Why can't we arrange that, because these two greats play only one format? If a lot of interest has returned to ODI cricket, these two have brought it."

Kohli and Rohit have not only drawn crowds but delivered consistently on the field. Rohit currently leads the ICC ODI batting rankings, with Kohli close behind in second, underlining their enduring dominance in the format. Pathan also urged Indian cricket to maximise the remaining window before the next World Cup. He suggested regular match exposure—both internationally and domestically—to maintain rhythm and sustain interest.

"The biggest thing is that they are also performing," Pathan said. "The World Cup is far away. The more we get to see them representing India, and even playing domestic cricket when not on national duty, the better it is."

As ODI cricket searches for relevance in a crowded calendar, Kohli and Rohit's star power may be its strongest asset—and, as Pathan argues, one that needs smarter scheduling to fully harness.

British boxing star released from hospital after accident that killed two teammates

Anthony Joshua Discharged After Fatal Road Crash in Nigeria

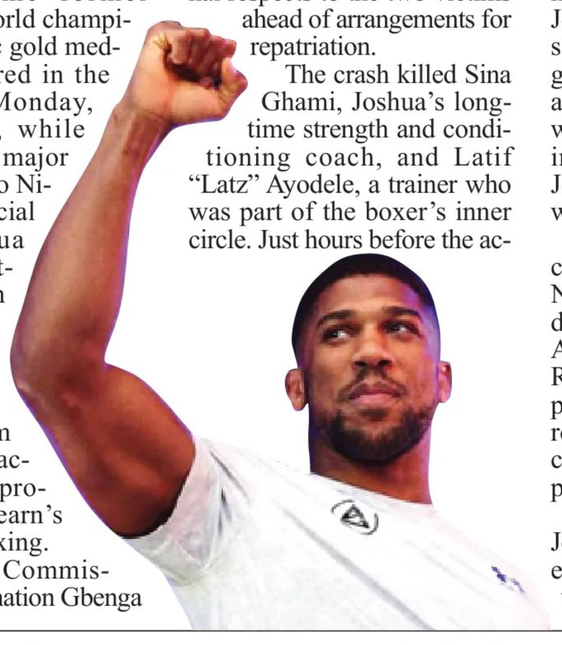
ABUJA

British boxer Anthony Joshua has been discharged from hospital after being involved in a fatal road crash near Lagos that claimed the lives of two of his close associates, Nigerian authorities said.

The two-time former heavyweight world champion and Olympic gold medallist was injured in the accident on Monday, December 29, while travelling on a major highway close to Nigeria's commercial capital. Joshua had been admitted to Lagoon Hospital in Lagos and placed under observation while recovering from minor injuries, according to his promoter Eddie Hearn's Matchroom Boxing.

Lagos State Commissioner for Information Gbenga Omotoso said in a statement posted on X that Joshua was released late Wednesday afternoon after doctors deemed him clinically fit to continue recuperating at home. Omotoso added that Joshua and his mother later visited a funeral home in Lagos to pay their final respects to the two victims ahead of arrangements for repatriation.

The crash killed Sina Ghami, Joshua's longtime strength and conditioning coach, and Latif "Latz" Ayodele, a trainer who was part of the boxer's inner circle. Just hours before the accident, Joshua and Ayodele had shared videos on social media of themselves playing table tennis, highlighting the closeness of the group.



Eddie Hearn earlier paid tribute to the victims, saying their energy, loyalty and dedication would be deeply missed. The vehicle carrying Joshua and his team struck a stationary truck on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway, a key artery linking Ogun State with Lagos. Footage circulating on social media showed Joshua being pulled from the wreckage in visible pain.

The tragedy has reignited concerns over road safety in Nigeria, where traffic accidents remain a major issue. According to the Federal Road Safety Corps, 5,421 people were killed in 9,570 road accidents in 2024, an increase of 340 deaths compared to the previous year.

Nigeria is the homeland of Joshua's parents, and the boxer has maintained strong ties with the country.

Neymar Set to Extend Santos Stay until End of 2026: Reports

SAO PAULO

Brazilian forward Neymar is set to renew his contract with Santos until December 31, 2026, according to sources close to the negotiations. The announcement follows a cryptic social media post by Santos, showing an aerial view of their Vila Belmiro stadium with the date "December 31, 2026" and the text: "The time is coming," fueling speculation about the superstar's future. Neymar, 33, returned to his boyhood club at the start of the season but faced interruptions due to injuries. Despite this, he scored four goals in Santos' final three games, helping the team avoid relegation on the last day of the season in December. Following the campaign, Neymar underwent a successful operation on his left knee to repair a damaged meniscus. The surgery, performed by Brazil's national team doctor, was confirmed by Santos on December 22. The Brazilian star is expected to make a full recovery before the start of the 2026 season.

Vengsarkar questions selectors as Sarfaraz Khan's domestic excellence continues to be overlooked

Vengsarkar Slams Selectors over Sarfaraz Snub, Calls Omission a 'Real Shame'

NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer and ex-BCCI chief selector Dilip Vengsarkar has strongly criticised the national selection committee, led by Ajit Agarkar, for repeatedly overlooking Mumbai batter Sarfaraz Khan despite his consistent domestic performances and credible returns at the international level.

Sarfaraz's journey with the Indian team has been anything but smooth. After piling on runs across multiple Ranji Trophy seasons, he finally earned his maiden Test call-up against England in 2023. While his opportunities were limited, the right-hander made the most of them, scoring 371 runs in six Tests at an average of 37.10, including a century and three half-centuries. Yet, following the 2024–25 Border-Gavaskar Trophy — in which he did not feature in a single match — Sarfaraz was dropped from the Test side.

What has baffled Vengsarkar further is Sarfaraz's continued exclusion despite visible efforts to address past concerns. The Mumbai batter has worked extensively on his fitness, shedding significant weight, and has remained prolific on the domestic circuit. He was also ignored for recent home Test series against the West Indies and South Africa.

"You know, it's really baffling for me why he's not picked in any format," Vengsarkar told. Recalling Sarfaraz's impactful debut series, he highlighted a crucial partnership with Devdutt Padikkal against England in Dharamshala that played a decisive role in India's Test victory. "They batted beautifully under pressure," he said.

Sarfaraz's current form only strengthens Vengsarkar's argument. In the ongoing Vijay Hazare Trophy, he has amassed 220 runs in just three innings, including a blistering 157 off 75 balls against Goa.

Despite touring Australia for the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Sarfaraz was again left on the sidelines. "Such a talent has been ignored and neglected," Vengsarkar said. "He is good enough to play all formats. It's a real shame."

Prabhas' Spirit Poster Sparks Comparisons

Filmmaker Sandeep Reddy Vanga unveiled the first look poster of his upcoming cop drama Spirit at midnight on New Year's Day, bringing 2026 with a bold image starring Prabhas and Triptii Dimri.

The poster instantly grabbed attention online, drawing praise from fans while also sparking debate over its similarity to Vanga's earlier hit, Animal.

In the visual, Prabhas appears shirtless, his back turned to the camera, with visible injuries and bandages across his body. He is seen holding a liquor bottle and smoking, suggesting a dark and intense character.

Triptii Dimri, wearing a grey sari, is shown lighting a cigarette for him, adding to the gritty mood.

Many fans praised Prabhas' lean and muscular look, comparing it to his Baahubali-era fitness.

At the same time, critics felt the poster closely resembled scenes from Animal, especially those showing a wounded hero being cared for by Triptii's character.

Some viewers said the casting of Triptii worked better than Deepika Padukone, who exited earlier due to scheduling issues.

Spirit also stars Vivek Oberoi in a key role, reportedly as the villain. Produced by T-Series and Bhadrakali Pictures, the film is expected to release later this year.

Mark Completes First Week With Rs 21.14 Crore Collection

Kannada star Kichcha Sudeep's latest action thriller Mark has completed one week in theatres with a total box office collection of Rs 21.14 crore. Released on Christmas, the film opened to strong numbers but saw a steady fall during weekdays. As per industry tracker Sacnilk, Mark earned more than Rs 8.6 crore on its opening day. The film collected around Rs 3.2 crore each on Friday and Saturday, followed by Rs 3.5 crore on Sunday. Weekday business slowed, with collections of Rs 1.15 crore on Monday, Rs 90 lakh on Tuesday, and an estimated Rs 69 lakh on Wednesday.

On the attendance front, the film recorded an overall Kannada occupancy of 16.03 percent on Wednesday. Morning shows saw 9.43 percent occupancy, which rose to 16.81 percent in the afternoon. Evening shows touched 19.74 percent, while night shows closed at 18.14 percent. Directed by Vijay Karthikeyaa, Mark features Sudeep as a suspended police officer racing against time to solve the kidnapping of 18 children. The story unfolds in Mangaluru and involves a drug racket, political links, and clashes between criminal gangs. The film also stars Naveen Chandra as villain Bhadra and Shine Tom Chacko as politician Adikeshava, with Yogi Babu, Roshini Prakash, and Archana Kottige in key roles. Music by Ajaneesh Loknath has received praise. While fans appreciated Sudeep's screen presence and action scenes, some felt the storyline was familiar. Overall, the film continues attracting audiences and maintains stable collections across Karnataka theatres statewide.

Anurag Kashyap Recalls Painful Phase After Bombay Velvet Failure

Anurag Kashyap has spoken candidly about the difficult period he faced after his 2015 film Bombay Velvet failed at the box office. Starring Ranbir Kapoor and Anushka Sharma, the ambitious project did not meet expectations and deeply affected everyone involved. In a recent interview, Kashyap admitted that the failure strained his relationship with the lead actors, especially Ranbir Kapoor, who was reportedly very upset. Kashyap shared that Ranbir often asked him not to mention Bombay Velvet again and wanted to move on from the experience.

The director said he felt guilty and awkward facing both Ranbir and Anushka after the film's release, as they had trusted him completely. While they continued to greet each other when they met, the initial period after the failure was emotionally heavy. Kashyap was also dealing with personal struggles at the time and chose to step back, focusing instead on making the smaller, darker film Raman Raghav. This phase led to a gradual distance between him and the actors.

Pawan Kalyan Signs New Film With Surender Reddy Director

Actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan surprised his fans at the start of 2026 by signing a new Telugu film directed by Surender Reddy and written by Vakkantham Vamsi.

The announcement was made on Thursday, January 1, by producer Ram Talluri, who shared the news on social media.

Talluri said the project is his dream launch as Production Number One under JaithraRamaMovies, adding that the film title was named with the blessings of Pawan Kalyan.

Writer Vakkantham Vamsi also confirmed the collaboration and said the new year became special because of the chance to work with the Power Star.

For months, fans believed Pawan Kalyan had stepped away from films after becoming the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.

Though he completed his pending movies in 2025, no fresh projects were announced until this development.

The actor had earlier agreed to work with Surender Reddy, but that film did not take off.

With this announcement, the long-pending combination has finally come together, raising excitement among his supporters.

Over the years, Pawan Kalyan has balanced cinema and politics, returning to films occasionally.

His recent releases include Hari Hara Veera Mallu, They Call Him OG, while Ustaad Bhagat Singh is yet to reach theatres.

The new film, expected in 2026, has already renewed hopes of seeing the Power Star back in a strong action role that blends mass appeal with commercial storytelling. Fans now eagerly await further details about the cast, schedule, and storyline, hoping the project lives up to expectations nationwide.

Producer Soundarya Rajinikanth's With Love Set February 6 Release

Producer Soundarya Rajinikanth's upcoming romantic film With Love will release in cinemas worldwide on February 6, the makers announced on New Year's Day. The film is directed by Madhan and stars Abishan Jeevinth and Anaswara Rajan in the lead roles. The announcement created interest as the film is produced by Soundarya Rajinikanth along with Magesh Raj Pasilian. Soundarya shared the release date on social media, saying the new year brings new emotions and love to the big screen.

Superstar Rajinikanth released the film's title teaser and wished the team success. Soundarya thanked her father, calling his support her biggest blessing. The teaser introduced Sathya, played by Abishan Jeevinth, and Monisha, played by Anaswara Rajan. It hinted at their contrasting personalities through lighthearted moments. Sathya is shown as possessive and impulsive, while Monisha calmly explains the difference between suspicion and care.

The film has already completed shooting. Sources said the entire movie was filmed in Chennai and Trichy. Post-production work is progressing at a fast pace.

With Love has drawn attention as it marks the acting debut of Abishan Jeevinth, who earlier directed the hit film Tourist Family. That movie, made on a modest budget, earned over Rs 90 crore and won praise from audiences and critics. The film features music by Sean Roldan, cinematography by Shreyaas Krishna, editing by Suresh Kumar, art direction by Raj Kamal, and costumes by Priya Ravi. Expectations are high for the film overall.

Yami Gautam Shares Hilarious Theatre Story From Early Days

Bollywood actress Yami Gautam recently shared a funny incident from her early theatre days that left her schoolmates in splits. During the promotions of her latest film Haq, Yami recalled a moment when she delivered a line in an unusual way that unexpectedly amused everyone. She said, There was a new theatre teacher at school, and theatre was just being introduced. I had to say the line, 'Keep still, you little devil, or I will slit your throat.' There were 35 students, and everyone had to say their lines differently. When it was my turn, I said it in a very weird way. Everyone burst out laughing, even though I was being serious. The teacher said, 'You sounded like a street, like a pocket man.' I replied, 'I don't know what else to do, but at least you remember my lines. I gave it a shot.'

Yami also reflected on the actor-director dynamic, explaining that actors help bring the director's vision to life. The director guides the story. You can perform a character in many ways, but we are illustrations of the director's vision. That's the fun, she said.

Currently promoting Haq, Yami spoke about the film, which is inspired by the landmark Shah Bano case. The story explores issues of justice and women's rights, focusing on a Muslim woman seeking maintenance after divorce. Haq highlights legal reforms under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, emphasizing that maintenance applies to all citizens regardless of religion. The film, coupled with Yami's engaging stories from her early acting days, continues to spark interest among audiences nationwide.

Demonte Colony 3 First Look Raises Expectations For Horror Franchise

The makers of director Ajay Gnanamuthu's much-awaited horror thriller Demonte Colony 3 released the film's first look poster on Thursday, marking the New Year with excitement among fans. The film stars Arulnithi and Priya Bhavani Shankar in the lead roles and is the third part of the successful Demonte Colony franchise.

With the first two films performing strongly at the box office, expectations for the third instalment are high. The film is scheduled for a worldwide theatrical release later this year.

Producer Sudhan Sundaram said beginning 2026 with Demonte Colony 3 feels promising. He praised director Ajay Gnanamuthu for maintaining discipline and completing work on time without compromising on quality. He added that Arulnithi continues to be the backbone of the franchise, while several actors from the second part return with stronger character arcs and higher emotional stakes.

Director Ajay Gnanamuthu said sharing the first look at the start of the year felt special for fans. He thanked the producer for offering full creative freedom while ensuring the film remains complete and engaging. The director also said the new film pushes Arulnithi to explore deeper layers of performance.

Written and directed by Gnanamuthu, the film reunites Arulnithi and Priya Bhavani Shankar, along with Meenakshi Govindarajan, Archana Ravichandran, Muthukumar and others in important roles. Production began in July 2025 and the project is now in post-production.

Produced by Passion Studios on a grand scale, Demonte Colony 3 promises stronger supernatural elements and aims to be a major chapter in Tamil cinema's growing horror genre for audiences worldwide.

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